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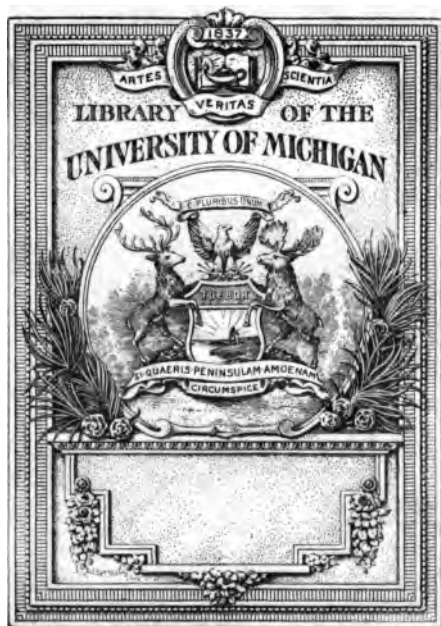
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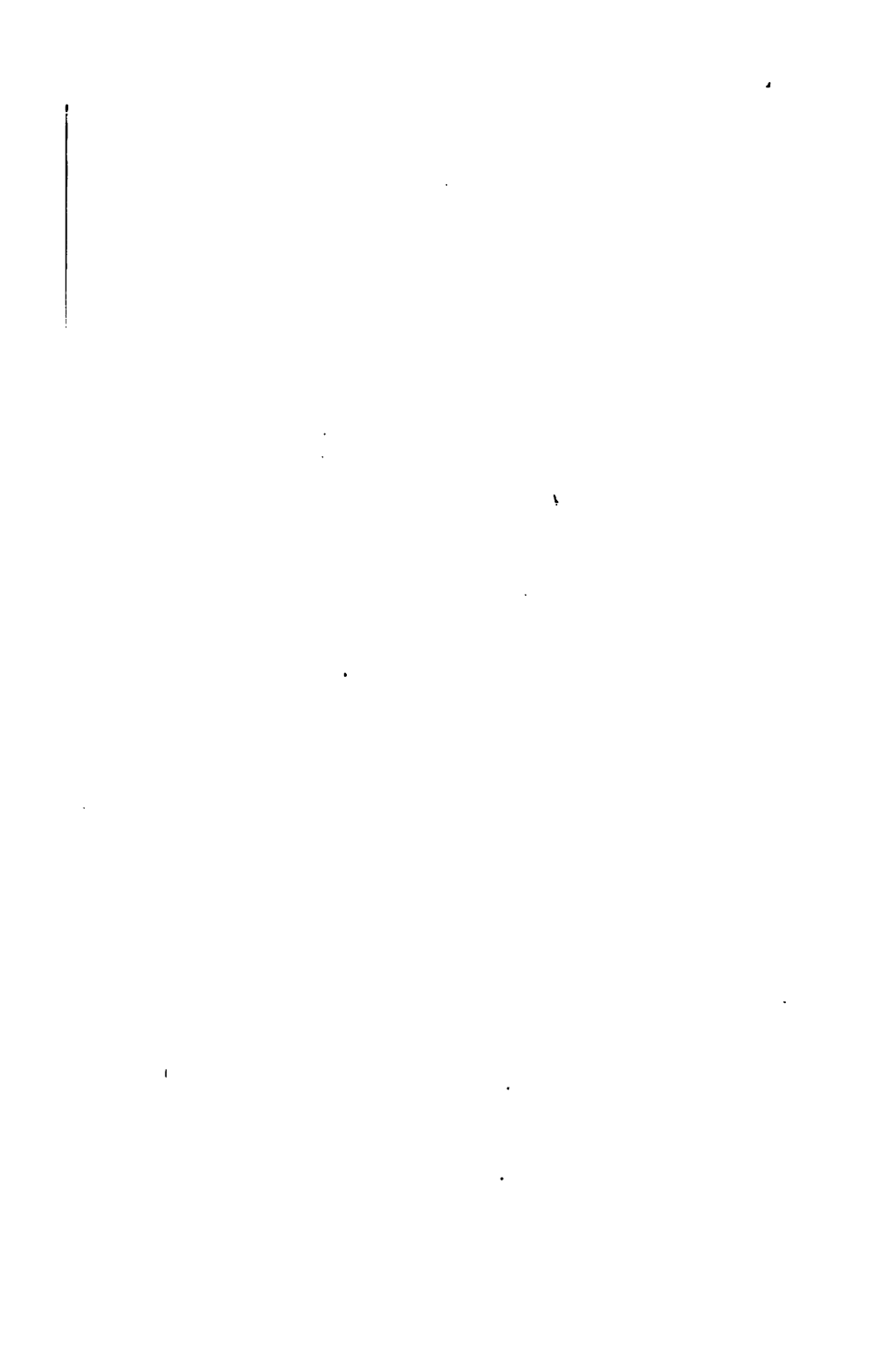
# HAPPY HUMANITY

BY

FREDERIK VAN EEDEN



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**HAPPY HUMANITY**



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Photograph by Gertrude Käsebier

**DR. FREDERIK VAN EEDEN**

# HAPPY HUMANITY

BY

DR. FREDERIK VAN EEDEN



GARDEN CITY    NEW YORK  
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY  
1912

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## INTRODUCTION

THE following pages want some apology. They are autobiographical in a degree not corresponding with my intention nor justified by the eventfulness, the adventurousness, the narrative importance of my life. Yet, as the editors of this book kindly suggested, they may have a value and an interesting quality, by showing how private events brought me to my present attitude and convictions. I tell these individual particulars reluctantly, for what really is of worth and value is only their general significance. Things personal are bound to vanish, and the less attention we pay them the better, and in telling this story I beg to observe that I do not think my facts important in themselves but only instructive in showing the influence that outward and personal events exist on our inward struggle for light, for freedom, and for universality.



Photograph by Gertrude Kasebier

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## CHAPTER I

### DREAMS OF YOUTH

**H**OLLAND, in the middle of the nineteenth century, was in a peculiar condition. It had gone over heights of wealth and glory, and through depths of misery and humiliation; it had seen its commerce ruined by England; it had been brutally bullied and exploited by Napoleon; it had lost its fleet, its colonies, its influence; it had seen the houses of its towns stand empty, and the number of its subsidized paupers increased terribly. Only by the grace of mightier powers it had been put upon its legs again, and established as a "bufferstate" between Germany and England. It had all the qualities of an old man rumbling and musing over the vicissitudes of life, sneering mildly at the hopes and illusions of younger people. Its patriotism, though still alive and kept up in a formal and rhetorical way, had a sour taste of skepticism in it; its great art seemed lost and it considered the interest of the foreigner principally from the lucrative sides after the manner of the old peasant that welcomes the pedler who is interested in his

crockery and china; its architecture was a horrid imitation of Italian Renaissance; its literature had for its best quality a mild and gentle irony, a provincial humour.

Then, in the sixties, we woke up. The revival was due largely to the pushing influence of the powerfully rising antagonist of France and England — the great "Hinterland," Germany. We were in the way of Germany in her path to the sea, and we had to stir, whether we wanted to or not.

This waking up was anticipated, however, by a hidden and unnoticed revival of our special art, the art of painting. We had our splendid artistic dreams just before we woke up at a new daybreak. A group of mighty painters, the brothers Maris, Anton Mauve, Jozef Israels, began their work, and in the sixties had already made their masterpieces, although their fame was not established before the end of the century.

Now, when we consider the progress of architecture over the whole world, it seems as if the low watermark of taste was reached about that time in all countries. The time of the second French Empire, the time of the crinoline, was also the period in which the ugliest buildings ever made by human hand were erected in Europe and America. Then by some mysterious reason the pendulum swung back and another Renaissance began.

What we had to struggle for in Holland was to get out of provincialism and narrow, self-satisfied dulness, to return into the great universal current of life; we did not recognize real art when we saw it.

When I was born the great masterpieces of my famous townsman, Frans Hals, now the principal pride of Haarlem, had just been recovered from the mould and dust of some dark attic, where they had been lying — *rolled up*, if you please — for about a century, as worthless rags. Most striking it is to observe that Jozef Israels, the Nestor of modern Dutch painters, who is over eighty now, and still vigorously working, had to go through a very long struggle before he could break the bonds of conventionalism and bad taste, reach artistic freedom, and become the man of world-wide renown he is now.

It was hard and painful work to get out of the mire of dulness, laxity, and complacency in which we struggled. My whole life up to this day has been one long and difficult progress from provincialism to universality, carried on in the hope of sharing the renewed vitality of the human race of this most eventful and significant age.

As a nation we were not poor. We had been humiliated and impoverished, but we had still some sources of wealth left; there was Java of our colonies; and there was interest on the money we had lent to foreigners. We were not penniless — but worse,

we were a nation of a few well-to-do rentiers and of many paupers living by charity. Rich and poor were satisfied in their lot, and had lost all inclination for improvement.

When you come to my native town, Haarlem, the most curious things to see — besides the paintings of Hals — are the so-called *Hofes*. *Hofes* are charitable institutions founded by some wealthy donor who gave his name to the foundation, as a sure way to gain salvation in Heaven, and a long and honoured reputation on earth. Poor old people live there in neat little ivy-covered mansions grouped round a quiet green square where there are flowers and a well. There were more than twenty of these "havens of rest" in Haarlem when I was a boy. I like to think of the picturesque quiet, the atmosphere of pensive peacefulness of these secluded squares, where old women with their pussies on the floor beside them, and their canaries hanging in the windows, looked on the rare visitor from behind their well-scoured panes.

Around Haarlem, flower-growing has become at this day a most prosperous trade, extending rapidly, and bringing in millions of dollars. For generations my ancestors had been florists and at the time of my birth my grandfather held the estate owned now by the well-known firm Krelage & Son. He was representative of the condition of his trade and of his country at the time.

He was rather well-off and had no cares. He was a modest, mild, gentle, humorous man with a considerable literary talent and no sense of business at all. He loved his hyacinths and his tulips, but especially his dahlias, which were then called Georginas — and his great delight was not to sell them at a good price, but to sit among them on a sunny day to muse and smoke.

He left us many unpublished volumes of drama and poetry, all written out by himself in clear and neat handwriting, without a mistake or correction. Moreover, he left the estate in a very low condition. In his narrow, timid, tender frame of mind he educated his children timidly and sentimentally. My father, his only son, was allowed no sport, no physical exercise; he could not swim, or ride, or skate for fear it would hurt his constitution. For when all incentive for progress and development is stifled by the quiet and comfort of a contemplative life, what is the use of running risks, courting dangers, and exposing your health? My grandfather felt no terror of the abyss of dulness and provincialism into which he and his race were slowly sinking.

In my father, however, the spark of life and energy began to scintillate again. The worst thing I can say of him is that he had not the quality of heroism. If he had possessed it, he would have been one of the great men of his country, even of the world. For

we were a nation of a few many paupers living by were satisfied in their lot for improvement.

When you come to my most curious things to of Hals — are the so-called institutions founded who gave his name to them to gain salvation in Heaven, honoured reputation on earth there in neat little ivy round a quiet green square and a well. There were “havens of rest” in Holland. I like to think of the peaceful sphere of pensive peace squares, where old women the floor beside them, in the windows, looking behind their well-scurved

Around Haarlem, from this day a most prosperous and bringing in millions my ancestors had been my birth my grandfather by the well-known family representative of the his country at the time

thinker, able to find the gold of truth in the ore of every religion.

From a bulb-grower he became a botanist. He had a disdain for all cultivated plants, which he called coarse, gaudy, pretentious, strong-scented things, bred to suit the taste of vulgar and commonplace people; and he turned all his love and interest to the wild plants of his country, the "weeds," as he called them. He wrote the *Flora Batava*, a compendium of all our native plants, and a manual of popular botany, called "Weeds," which is still read all over Holland, besides other scientific and philosophical writings.

In the meantime he did good practical work for the welfare of his country, and was especially interested in our large colonies. "Holland has forty million inhabitants," he used to say, referring to the population of Java, "and a grave under the palms is better than a useless life at home."

What he did was a great advance on the ancestral laxity. Privately he made a large collection of colonial products, armory, and works of art, which formed the foundation of what has now become the National Colonial Institute. He started also a museum for applied art, with a school attached to it; he was the first to introduce the Scandinavian Sloyd, the educational manual work, from Sweden into Holland; and he did all he could to further the



scientific exploration of our neglected American possession, Surinam.

My father did not like his contemporaries, though he did so much for their benefit. He loved nature passionately and sneered sarcastically at man. "Man is a blot on nature," he said. "Look at his build. Did you ever see such a clumsy arrangement? Everything hung up on a spinal cord, like an umbrella-stand with a top-heavy globe uppermost. A perfect being ought to be spherical." And then he made funny drawings of a society of globular beings. One of his last sayings was a grim Voltairean joke at the expense of man: "The creator made an awful blundering mess of humanity," he said, "and if I happen to meet him, you may be sure I will tell him so straight to his face."

My first years were spent at the bulb farm, in a long one-storied house just outside the gate of Haarlem. There was then still a real mediæval gate, which was shut at nine in the evening. I remember how we used to hurry out from town to get there before nine; for otherwise we had to pay a penny to the gate-keeper for opening the door.

The farm was a delicious place for a dreamy, romantic sort of child. The endless square beds of gayly coloured fragrant flowers, the long airy barns where the bulbs, laid out to dry, spread their peculiar pungent smell; the hothouses, the orchard — it was a little world full of interest and wonder.

Haarlem is situated on what is called in Holland a "river," though I could never tell in which direction the water is flowing. We, like other respectable families, had a little tea-house on the border of that river, whereto we went on Saturday afternoons. I can still see our little procession, father, mother, and the two boys carrying baskets with victuals, followed by the family cat with tail erect. There on the riverside we drank tea, plucked raspberries, and enjoyed life, I do not remember exactly how. But everything was eminently peaceful and provincial.

My father with his philosopher's disdain for business and commercialism, and his botanical contempt for cultivated flowers, soon sold the farm and removed to a spacious, old-fashioned house in town. Rural life, to my great regret, was at an end, and I have hated town-life ever since. My father took me with him on his botanical excursions around Haarlem; and in the woods and parks of private country-seats, and especially in the uncultivated dunes between the town and the sea, we had our dreams of unspoiled nature.

To an American our wilderness would seem but a small area, but to my father and me it was a whole world of savage and lovely scenery. We had our Switzerland there, with her lakes and mountains to explore, and we knew the spots where rare flowers grew. And my father's boyish delight, his real ecstasy, in discovering a new plant, or in the punctual

reappearance of an expected flower at some secret spot known only to us, was a thing never to be forgotten.

There and then, like him, I began to love nature above humanity. This wonderful distinction between the totality of animals and plants, including earth and sea and sun and stars, which we call "Nature," and which is always beautiful and sympathetic even in its cruelty and inexorableness, and that particular and so much less sympathetic animal which we call man was a puzzle to me from my earliest years. I questioned my father constantly and he answered patiently as best he could. I especially remember his hardly perceptible smile, immediately subdued in order not to hurt my childish pride, when I, a boy of ten, walking hand in hand with him, started the conversation in this way: "Now, father, let us talk again on nature and humanity."

In fact, I did not like towns, nor schools — which were then indeed, by some incomprehensible ordinance, the barest, ugliest, most unattractive buildings in town. I did not like my fellow man. Of course I had my class chum, and, earlier, my sweetheart; but these were glorious exceptions, and, I am sorry to say, cruel deceptions also. To all other human creatures I felt very strange, like an exile among foreigners, and I was aware that this was my father's feeling also. But where he laughed and jested and sneered, I felt more inclined to kick

and cry. It was to me a serious puzzle of sad and mysterious significance; it was no matter for amusement at all.

I found man coarse, vulgar, brutal, and eminently ugly. There was no self-conceit or self-elation in this feeling; I did not consider myself an exception and was not at all conscious of being finer than they. But my feelings were hurt by the individuals of my own race, constantly, and I could not help it.

Perhaps all this will be called morbid. But here I beg the kind reader to consider. Morbidity is a deviation from the healthy, normal constitution of man. Ought a healthy, normal human being to be vulgar, coarse, egotistic, dirty, uncivilized, dull, ugly? And if not, is it then a token of morbidity to be very keenly conscious of these defects? Will not the healthy mind be more keenly aware of them than the unhealthy? Compare mankind with any other race. Take wild flowers or animals — take violets, rabbits, sea-gulls, swallows, butterflies. All are subject to diseases. But out of every thousand individuals, how many will you find abnormal, deformed? Hardly a dozen. Every moth, every fly, is perfection in its kind.

And now look at man. You will find the proportion exactly reversed. How many out of a thousand are well-formed, beautiful, noble-minded, generous, wise, honest, high-spirited? How many are perfection in *their* kind?

Human perfection means more, is more difficult to reach, you will say. Very well, but we were talking of morbidity — i.e., abnormality, deviation from the healthy. You know Luther Burbank, the great breeder, the improver of races, the creator of new forms. Suppose we came to him with a race in the same condition as mankind in its present stage, and asked him to improve it — what would he have to do?

The answer is clear. He would have to select and to destroy — destroy, destroy, kill, burn, stamp out — just as he did with millions of weeds. Out of every thousand he would have to select a dozen, perhaps one or two, and destroy the rest. He would select the well-built, the beautiful of countenance, the high-minded, the noble-spirited — and from these few he would breed a new race. Then we should see for the first time a really healthy humanity. We should see undreamed wonders of material prosperity united with spiritual elevation and brotherly love, we should see the kingdom of God remarkably close by. For this is our latest scientific discovery in the matter of heredity and breeding, that a race can be improved only from the inside — that is to say, not by improving outer conditions for a great many, but by breeding carefully from a few select parents.

Of course I do not advocate this wholesale destruction as a practical measure. It would offer

some difficulties, and would find much opposition, especially in a democratic age like ours. We have to trust in the final efficacy of a much longer, round-about method, consisting principally of education, self-control, and self-insight.

But I wanted to point out that morbidity must not be spoken of where there is incipient recovery. For self-insight, consciousness of disease, is the first condition for restoration of health

I might have been called "morbid" if my sensitiveness had led me to bitter despair and hate. If I had become an enemy of society, if I had become a monk, a hermit, a crank, an anarchist, an apache, a *cambricoleur*, a robber, a tramp, or a burglar, I might with justice have been accused.

As I grew older, I began to disagree with my father because of his light-hearted, jocular way of taking such a serious matter as life. Here came in some qualities of my maternal ancestry. My mother was descended from an old Dutch family that counted many clergymen of the Dutch Reformed Church among its members. Her own father was a tall, earnest, sturdy preacher. Her brother, a man of the same stamp, went to South Africa as a clergyman and was the only preacher of the Transvaal who responded at the call of the insurgent Boers, and joined the meeting at Paardekraal where war was declared against England in 1880, December 12th. Another of her brothers went to Java as

a soldier, and was wounded and won the cross in the war against the Balinese. I remember my pride in his beautiful uniform; I remember his scarred, martial, sunburned face when he came home on furlough. And I remember my despair a few months later, when I ran across the street crying and sobbing loudly, in order to tell my poor grandmother the sad news, just arrived, that he was shot and killed.

I was born a philosopher like my father, but because of my inheritance from my mother I did not want to be only a laughing philosopher, I wanted to be a fighting one.

When asked what my profession would be, my answer was: "poet and painter." My father used to amuse the family, or rather to amuse himself, at the cost of the family, by making facetious rhymes at every festive occasion or gathering. And I was, at an early age, considered a worthy successor in his quality as a family rhymer. Drawing caricatures and landscapes was my favourite occupation. Yet I never thought of these activities as a means of "making a living."

Money-getting was a thing that did not enter much into our conversation or our thoughts. My parents lived extremely simply and soberly — rather too primitively as it seems to me now. Money-matters were not considered interesting. There was a spirit of thrift, especially in my mother,

but that of accumulation seemed absent. When my love for nature and natural science awoke, I wished to become a zoölogist. And, in imitation of my father, I made collections of beetles, butterflies, shells, birds' eggs, and other *naturalia*.

During the fourteenth year of my life I was unable to read or write, because of a painful disease of the eyes, which obliged me to stay in a dark room. I spent that year quite patiently shut off from the world, dictating verses to my mother and dreaming. With all its physical suffering, this year is not at all unpleasant in my memory.

When I recovered, I began to raise silkworms as an occupation that needed no exertion of the eyes. Soon I filled the spacious attic of our house with large, low, open wooden boxes in which my thousands of cream-white caterpillars gnawed their mulberry leaves; and I was busy the whole day in keeping them clean and in collecting their daily food from all the mulberry trees I could reach in or near Haarlem. When you entered the room the sound of their voracious feeding was like a summer rain on the foliage. Then thousands of little paper boxes had to be made and hung up on strings, and the worms, as they became ready to spin, were selected and housed to let them make their cocoons. I had the satisfaction to get a prize medal for my home-made silk.

To complete the cure of my eyes I went to a Ger-



man watering-place. And there I came in touch with English people. I have a suspicion that some of my Anglo-Saxon readers, when I expressed my juvenile dissatisfaction with humanity, said something like this: "Of course, poor boy! to be born and bred among Dutchmen! not the right place, indeed, for learning to admire humanity! How different it would all have been to him if he had been born in England — or at least in some Anglo-Saxon country."

In fact, when I had made my first English friends, and had seen English children, who happened to be remarkably pretty, I began to reconsider my verdict on humanity. If there existed a country where such lovely and graceful beings were the rule, and where the plain and vulgar ones were the exception, then I felt I could live there and be happy. Gladly I would prefer their company to that of my school friends and my caterpillars.

I decided to go to England and have a look at English people and a taste of the English hospitality that was kindly offered me by my new friends. The necessity to get money for my passage to London aroused in me an atavistic renewal of the ancestral business capacity. I sold a watch chain for outlay capital and started at once a little trade in soap, buying it from a factory and selling it to friends and relations. In a few weeks I had what I wanted — I think about

forty dollars — and I went to England. After the goal was reached, the soap business collapsed at once and for good.

I have my doubts whether it is needless to say that I did not find Happy Humanity in Great Britain and returned home disappointed. What struck me most in England was not the healthier race and the finer human individuals — though these were surely more conspicuous there than in my own degraded fatherland — but the intense self-complacency, the general feeling of racial superiority, the want of insight into defects of their own which were just as bad as those of other nations. London seemed to me a terrible place, gloomy, dingy, dark and melancholy, notwithstanding its grand aspects, its vigorous life, its sporadic beauty. Compared to clean, neat, bright little Holland, with its transparant air and its gayly coloured houses, London seemed little better than Niflheim, the Scandinavian Hell. And yet this same city of gloom, fog and squalor, of horrid poverty side by side with reckless luxury, was considered by its inhabitants a wonderful production and a proof of human greatness and power. At the home of my English friends, who were orthodox high-church people, I had my first taste of that terrible spirit of religious formality that lays particular stress on reading the Bible at all possible hours of the day, fit or unfit, with or without understanding, on sing-

ing hymns and being bored in church, and on doing nothing and looking dull on Sundays.

Being educated without any spiritual compulsion I had never understood until that time the bitter invectives of a poet like Lucretius against religion. After my visit to England I felt the meaning of that line so often quoted by my father:

*Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.*

I had seen how the minds of these pretty and graceful English children were twisted and corrupted by the petrified dogmas of a lifeless faith, how they were taught to consider themselves as belonging to the elect because they followed meaningless prescriptions and repeated things they could not understand. I had seen the pure, simple spirit of the genuine Christian faith turned into a narrow, harsh, forbidding doctrine. I saw the message of Jesus, meant as a liberation, used as a means for spiritual slavery.

When I was sixteen, my bodily eyes being healed and my spiritual soul's eyes beginning to open, I entered the lists, determined to fight for Happy Humanity.

At that time my favourite authors were Heine and our Dutch poet-freethinker Multatuli. I refused to become a member of any church, though all my family, and even my father, wanted me to do so. They tempted me to do as they wished by the

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promise of a gold watch and chain. But I said: *Vade retro!* and have worn a silver one until this day.

I never was a materialist, however, and my first dramatic production was a fantastic comedy — influenced by the reading of Aristophanes — in which I showed an “Empire of the learned” founded by a very clever professor on an uninhabited island. There everything was done scientifically and mathematically; Logic and Reason were the only Gods; Sentiment was not allowed unless rationally justified, and the Founder and Ruler of the Empire had a right to submit every citizen to an instantaneous examination concerning the soundness of his scientific knowledge and principles. Of course the *Deus ex Machina* whom I introduced was *Amor*. Love proved stronger than Reason, and at the moment when the Learned Tyrant invited one of his female subjects to write down at once the formula for maternal Love, after a glowing speech by the insurgent woman, rebellion broke out. The play was never performed and was of course only a juvenile attempt. At this present moment, however, thirty three years after I wrote it, it seems to me not at all out of date.

Life began now to show me its tragic side. A friend of our home, whom we all liked, and whose merry company I particularly enjoyed, was found by me in his room with a bullet in his head and the pistol in his hand.



— all this is pure blessing for the human mind, and it is too often neglected by the emotional poet or man of action.

It is true that our present scientific spirit is materialistic and rationalistic. It leads astray by trying constantly to explain the higher by the lower, by seeking to understand the divine order of the universe, by analyzing the material and animal part of things — which is of course like trying to read a book by analyzing chemically the paper and the ink.

But all that will come right by its own tendency toward truth. The pendulum had to swing in that direction, and it will return, brought back by man's indomitable desire for truth and beauty. Many suppose still, as I did when a boy, that man's goal will be reached when he is healthy and prosperous — with a sound body, no cares and enough to feed and clothe him.

I know now, as a man of fifty, that all this will leave us thoroughly dissatisfied; that this material earthly paradise, when reached, will leave us unhappy, discontented, sinking either into over-refinement and degeneration or into dulness and laxity.

I know also that this valley of scientific materialism has to be crossed in order to reach the glorious heights of unexpected and unconceivable beatitude beyond. And I do not regret that I sought my way through it, first as a doctor, then as a social reformer, ending as I began, as a poet.

What I learned in the first two activities found its explanation in the last. The practical career did not stifle my ideals or aspirations, but gave me solid matter to build with and prevented me from losing contact with earth and my fellow men, from trying to soar too high and too quickly.

Student life in Holland is probably the most unconstrained in the world. It has nothing like the discipline of the German universities, and keeps up no religious formality such as makes English and American colleges look so absurdly old-fashioned. The student in Holland is simply a citizen, as free as any other, who pays a certain small sum for the instruction he wants. His private life is of no concern to the professors; his religion is a matter of his own conscience.

This may seem an all too liberal treatment for young men between eighteen and twenty-five; yet it is the only thing the Hollander could stand. Our desire for individual freedom is so inveterate that we prefer taking the risks to curtailing it. As a matter of fact I do not believe that licentiousness is worse among students in Holland than in England. The Bohemian way, as it prevails in Paris, where every student lives with his *grisette*, is just as exceptional in Holland as in England. These things depend on custom and character far more than on compulsion and rules, or on religious formalities.

Although this time of a man's life is usually con-

sidered the most happy and careless — I did not particularly enjoy it. I took part in the usual fun and jollity as much as any one else; but I hated the town, and town life. I could never reconcile our amusements with the dulness, the ugliness, the misery around, and I had no spiritual satisfaction. The fashionable students forming what might be called the “club” showed in my time very little sign of spiritual life. They were a rather insignificant set; their entertainments and amusements were commonplace, without having wit or purpose. The few young men I knew of real wit and genius were poor, and lived a more or less Bohemian life in dingy rooms, in sordid streets. I felt repulsion toward both types; and my ideals of a glorious period of ardent youth, full of beauty and enthusiasm, of high aims and noble aspirations, were never realized. Among my contemporaries were poets of remarkable genius, yet they lived a narrow, provincial life. The great stream of the world with its freshness and vigour did not touch them. They formed little stagnant pools, very beautiful at first, but soon dirty and putrescent. They made wonderfully fine verses, while living in miserable surroundings, leading morbid lives. High ideals of practical value they did not foster. Humanity was strange to them, they felt themselves the elect, self-satisfied in individualism, untouched by what moved the multitude.



I was allied to these men, however, in one important matter — literature. We all together went in for a revival of our beautiful language and for the liberation of literature from the old bonds of conventionalism and bad taste. To accomplish this we started a review that had in this one respect a deep and beneficial influence.

In those student days I wrote several plays and had them performed successfully on the stage. Yet I never thought of making writing my profession. Multatuli, then a man nearing sixty, to whom I sent my work for approval, advised me to use my time better than by seeking rhymes and inventing stories about how John fell in love with Mary and how they got each other. "Better study some useful science," he said. And this I tried to do, settling myself as a physician in a village near Amsterdam — yet never ceasing to be interested in the way John got his Mary, and spending my leisure hours in seeking rhymes and inventing stories that never happened.

I had then all that a young man ought to be content with, health and a happy home life in a pleasant village, burdened by no cares and no wants. Yet I felt thoroughly unhappy and dissatisfied. I was vaguely and dimly conscious of the great wants of struggling humanity. I could hear the distant roar of human life in its strife for justice and happiness: I knew I could never feel satis-

faction in merely alleviating the physical troubles of a few sick people and in living by the price for which I could sell my cures to those who could afford it. I wanted to join the real current of actual life and take part in the important events of our wonderful time.

## CHAPTER II

### POET AND DOCTOR

**M**Y LIFE as a medical student in Amsterdam, which I have already briefly mentioned, brought me my first thoroughly disillusionizing and heart-breaking impressions. Often there comes back to my memory, and more vividly and painfully also in my dreams, the sensation I felt when entering for the first time the dissecting room.

Think of the feelings of a romantic boy with a tender character and an imagination constantly wrapped up in the beauties of wild nature, of flowers and birds and butterflies — when he comes into a low, bare room filled with a slight haze of tobacco smoke, oppressive with smells of carbolic acid and putrefying flesh — where on black tables, the ghastly remnants of what once were men were visible in vague and horrid confusion — while an apparently unconcerned crowd of young men in long, blood-soiled robes were busily active, chattering and sometimes loudly laughing, like workmen interested in a worned but not unpleasant task.

I did not want to be sentimental, however. I did not swoon, or grow pale, or shudder, or turn sick, as I have seen the newcomers do. I always could control my nerves fairly well, and I felt bound to take all this stoically, looking at it from the lofty viewpoint of the philosopher. Yet the impression must have been deep and terrible, for its horror never left me until this day. On the fresh and tender soul of a boy of eighteen, hungry for beauty and poetry, this gruesome aspect of what human beauty becomes in the end is like a heavy blow. The shock left a deep scar on my soul. We moderns are no Greeks — and Dutchmen least of all. The glories of the well-shaped human body are not a daily sight and constant joy for us. In this awful place, while my imagination was still pure and untouched, I saw for the first time the mystery of womanly beauty unveiled in a way horrible to behold. I felt it sometimes like an unpardonable insult, a crime never to be forgotten or forgiven, a shameful arrangement of life, of the world, to spoil and pollute a young, impressionable soul like this.

And yet, where was the wrong? Anatomy has to be learned in this way; there is no other. Whom could I call responsible unless it be the Creator who made us flesh?

There was, however, the indignity of it. These students looked like butcher boys, and had a light-

hearted businesslike way; sometimes they even affected an air of unconcernedness. Seeing them at work was like seeing flies or ants busy on a corpse. The solemnity of death was utterly disregarded. The facts that we are subject to all sorts of disease that have to be studied and cured, that what remains of our bodies, however graceful and beautiful, must become so horrible, loathsome, and ugly — all this is a deep, sad truth, and has to be approached with awe and earnestness. Nothing can be more revolting to the mind of the poet than to see this solemn and terrible study of anatomy and pathology brought down to the level of banality and everyday business.

This is only one side of what made my medical career so painful to me. The medical students in Holland, thirty years ago, were not a very high-minded or refined set. Medicine was then a business that promised an income, and the state paid allowances to medical students who signed for the Colonial army. This attracted many poor young men, who took up the study for no other reason than to make a living.

I once overheard one of my professors, rather an aristocrat and somewhat of a swell, saying with a sneer to a colleague who stood near him, as the two were watching the slovenly and ill-mannered crowd leave the lecture room: "Would one not say that I had given a bread and coffee distribution?"

Numerous and various were the ways by which this coarse and vulgar company offended my finer feelings. Their attitude in the lecture room, when a sick person from the hospital was brought in for demonstration, was shocking. They smoked and laughed and chattered, while the poor, pale sufferer — of course a pauper — was lying in their midst, sometimes looking around with shy, anxious glance — sometimes staring blankly, and sadly lost in his own troubles and cares.

Once a poor man was brought in affected with a very strange and rare disease of the spine, that caused him, by involuntary spasms of the legs, to jump and to continue hopping when he tried to stand on his legs. Our professor wanted to show this to his students and he requested the patient to stand on his feet. The poor man looked at the crowd around and said, with a pathetic, imploring look: "If the gentlemen will *please* not laugh." The professor promised they would be serious.

And yet, when the man began to hop, the "gentlemen" roared. And I felt the tears come to my eyes and my fists close in my pockets.

Of course nobody could be justly blamed — neither these sons of farmers and shopmen for not being refined and for trying to make a living, nor the professors, who did all they could to educate them and to make them as little dangerous as

possible before they were, as the saying ran, "turned loose upon humanity."

One question, however, presented itself to my mind more strongly every day and could not be discarded: Why was it that the rich man who was sick was surrounded by the most respectful silence and protected from all intrusion of strangers or of noisy or indifferent people — whereas the poor sufferer, because he had no money, was submitted to public demonstrations and used as a welcome and legitimate material for instruction? Would we suffer our ailing mother or sister to serve as an object on which a young and nervous candidate should pass his examination? If clinical practice is absolutely necessary for the student, why must it be the poor, and the poor only, to whose miseries, already so hard to bear, this new ordeal is added? Was it justice to make the poor workman, who had served society during health, continue serving it during sickness, and even after death in the dissecting room?

The dark and cruel phantom of social iniquity began to show itself. Was there indeed no man to blame and could responsibility be thrown on the Creator only? I felt the wrong keenly, but I saw no explanation, no issue, no way to help. The tremendous power of social convention, the all-pervading influence of general opinion that took these things as customary and right, veiled my true

judgment just as it did that of the majority — and it took me ten years at least of lonely struggle before I got true insight and saw the full extent of the evil, and the only way out of it.

The professor who had to give me my degree was a man of renown and a clever practitioner, but not much of a poet. He did not care for things unusual or for ways eccentric. He made me go to Paris in order to study the problem of nutrition in the disease of tuberculosis. In Paris I attended the lectures of Charcot and became acquainted with the wonders of hypnotism and suggestion, which were then only recently discovered. I saw how a blister could be raised on the skin of a sensitive person simply by sticking a glued piece of paper on it and by telling him positively that it was a cantharid plaster. I saw people put to sleep by a single word of command; merely by the power of verbal suggestion, they could be made to see pictures on blank walls, to feel a cold spoon glowing hot, to drink water and take it for wine. This interested me mightily, and on coming back to Amsterdam I wished to continue my study of this matter and to take my degree in it. My professor, however, considered it far too fantastical and extraordinary for a serious scientific work. He would not permit me to specialize in hypnotism, and I had to go on with the subject chosen by him.

In the meanwhile I could not give up writing



poetry and dramatic work. I never made any more effort than was strictly necessary to get through my examinations, and consequently I did not cut a brilliant figure.

When I was twenty-three I succeeded in getting my first comedy on the stage at the principal theatre of Amsterdam. It was a light and somewhat satirical play, in which I attacked, with a very characteristic want of diplomacy, exactly that power on which the career of a young playwright is depending—i. e., the press. It showed a big journalist, who had just torn to pieces the work of a young poet, praising another poem of that same poet highly, because he supposed it came from a rich young cad whom he considered a welcome suitor for his daughter.

Notwithstanding this rather reckless way of proceeding, the thing was a success. I even dare say that I never afterward could boast of anything so much like a decisive victory. Never, when in later years my claims to appreciation were much greater, have I received such an ovation. At that time I was young, unknown, and supported only by my student friends, and yet I was honoured with wreaths and presents and speeches—attentions which never were repeated when I began to do what I consider real work.

In April, 1886, I passed a busy few days: I celebrated my twenty-seventh birthday; and in the

same week presented the finished copy of my dissertation to my professor, married, and conducted the guests of my wedding party, by way of an extra treat, to the first night of my second play at the Municipal Theatre of Amsterdam. By good luck for me and the party the play did not fall through.

The life of a village practitioner did not satisfy me in the least. I have great respect for those who can do their daily rounds year after year and feel satisfaction in this career of useful drudgery. Yet I was not made for it. As soon as I felt free from all academical bonds I went again to France and studied hypnotism and suggestion in Paris and Nancy. When I came home I was in the highest spirits and radiantly told my friends that I had found the true cure for humanity. I had seen now that the body could be cured by the mind, and this I felt to be the only true and lasting cure. And I was not mistaken. I still think it is true — and in a far deeper and wider sense than I understood it at that time.

There was then only one other doctor in Holland interested in the same matter. And in order to act fairly and not to start a somewhat undignified competition, I proposed to found a common clinic at Amsterdam to be conducted by both of us and to be called by the new name *Psycho-therapeutic*. This enterprise turned out to be a great success — but principally for my colleague, not for me. He

is still conducting it and he sees a great number of patients every day. I left him after seven years of practice.

Why? Was there a serious reason for disappointment? We succeeded in curing many people, sometimes quite wonderfully and unexpectedly. Of course we failed very often, but the constant stream of visitors showed the increasing confidence of the public and the efficiency of our method. What could a doctor want more? In the beginning the vogue of our clinic grew so rapidly as to become embarrassing. The public was then not yet alarmed by the supposed or real dangers of hypnotism, and the rumours of some happy cures were widely spread. All those sufferers who went from one specialist to another seeking relief — especially from nervous troubles — now flocked to us. Our waiting rooms were crowded; our orthodox colleagues in the town became suspicious and began to talk of quackery and humbug. Every day we had a fair pile of coins to share. My companion, a better business man than I, took care of that department. To me it was the most disgusting part of the proceedings, however pleasant its final effect might seem. Once, when a patient, whose cure had cost me endless patience and trouble, given with all my heart, handed over to me the usual envelope with money, I felt so humiliated and ashamed that I tore the money from her hand

and threw it into the waste paper basket, with a gesture that must have seemed rather theatrical and foolish. Yet it came from a deep and real feeling. Of course I had to swallow my pride and humiliate myself still further by fishing the money carefully out from among the waste papers.

But this awful money question never stopped spoiling my fun in the work. It was like a disdainful penstroke through my finest efforts of charity. It was a refusal and an annulment of my gifts of love. The sufferer did not care to accept my kindness, he wanted to buy it — so much for every bit of good advice, so much for every kind word, so much for every hour of patience and effort — the tariff was in the waiting room.

And then these absurd distinctions of classes! We treated our poor patients gratis, as most doctors do, or at a very low fee. In order to do this we had to burden our richer patients more heavily. Broad-minded people did not object to this method. They had the sense of honour to give what they could spare for such an important service as the restoration of their health. They gave in a delicate way as if they were offering a gift which could never equal our services and for the acceptance of which they kindly thanked us.

But broad-minded people are rare, especially in Holland, and our task often became the loathsome task of the tax-collector. We had to tax our clients

and make them pay, sometimes even with the assistance of the strong hand of the law. To the poor I was free to be kind and good; to the rich I had to be a merchant in charity. To my good colleague this was no objection at all. He thought of his family, of the education of his children, and he knew how to combine these interests with those of science and of suffering humanity. To me such a confusion of sentiments was a sad and hopeless muddle. For that pride of the poet, which is his most delicate and at the same time his most stubborn quality, I found no place in present society. It was entirely useless and troublesome. I may add that I went through the same experience with regard to my artistic productions. It was just as disgusting to me to barter my poetry for so many cents a line to publishers as it was to sell my acts of love and service to invalids.

The result was that I preferred to live on the money given to me by my wealthy relations, exactly the state of affairs that is considered most humiliating in our present society — why, more so than other things, I failed to see.

Having retired from our clinic in Amsterdam and being once more free to have my own way, I still continued to see patients. But I told them, in a printed pamphlet, that I helped them for love's sake and refused to sell my services or to tax their financial power. I said, however, that I would

accept any gift they would offer me, seeing no humiliation in the acceptance of one cent or of a million. I would rather be a beggar and live on alms than be a dealer in things that have no equivalent in money.

Useless to say that my patients did not like this sort of idealism! They wanted to buy my services at fashionable prices, and even to haggle over them and make a good bargain. Until this day I have not come to an understanding with them, either in matters of charity or of art. And I know that only a better organization of society can bring about the settlement of this quarrel. Now and then, however, as a pleasant exception, I am able to help somebody or to do some good without the money-question spoiling my fun. In the English language there is a very characteristic word for the payment given to a doctor. It is called a "fee." I often wondered how those proud British physicians could endure so gracefully to be treated like a waiter or a valet.

In the course of time, however, the force of circumstances bent my idealistic sentiments in a new direction. I wanted money because I had a family to take care of. I wanted the necessities of life that money can buy. And I saw no shame at all in exchanging material things, food and clothes, for their equivalent in money. Commerce was all right when limited to material production. So

if I objected to selling art and charity, and did not want to live on alms, I had only one way out: taking part in material production.

And this is indeed what I then tried to do. I realized perfectly well that it would be impossible to subsist entirely in that way. In Holland the average wage of the land labourer — the man whose labour is most certainly and entirely productive — amounted to three or four dollars a week. I saw no possibility of sustaining my family on less than five times that amount.

If the ideal could not be attained in that way, at least it could be approached. By living soberly and doing my very best I would lessen at least the amount of alms I had to accept. Though perhaps not able to compete with the trained land labourer, I felt healthy and strong and liked outdoor work. Moreover, intelligence might come in and make up for the want of muscular strength. And then the poor land labourer, as I knew perfectly well, was cheated out of his full earnings by landlord and middleman. I would buy my own piece of land, and use my own products, eliminating in that way to a certain extent the landlord and the middleman.

I remember very clearly my condition of mind when I resolved to follow up this plan, now some twelve years ago. I had a clear presentiment of what it would mean. It looked very simple and sensible — yet it was a jump into the dark, and a

declaration of independence — that is, of *war* — against society. Until that day I had been a successful and fashionable doctor and man of letters — with a few queer but quite pardonable eccentricities. After that day I was a crank, an enemy of the existent social order, a lost sheep, a welcome object for derision or pity. And the worst of it was that I was not the only sufferer. I had to draw my family with me. And by unforeseen complications this responsibility became hardest of all to bear.

My literary career had been quiet and not unsuccessful. Considering conditions in Holland my books sold rather well and brought me between \$400 and \$1000 a year. Of course I had the usual experiences of young authors and made the usual blunders. I sold the copyright of my first book to a publisher for \$60, and he made me believe, in all faith, that I had made a good bargain. Several years later when I wanted to buy that copyright back he would not give it under \$10,000. The good bargain was evidently on his side. I had given up writing for the stage because the managers wanted me to do what I thought inferior work and refused to present what, in my opinion, was really good art. I resolved to do without managers and theatres and wrote two great plays, a tragedy and a drama, which I consider my best productions; the staging of them, however, would hardly have been possible in the form they were then, because I did not count with



the theatre. In later years I came down from my proud attitude and adapted both plays for the German stage.

By this time my position in the literary world had become quite isolated. The success of my earlier years had died away. I was now striking another note and giving my real, deeper self. The poet true to his mission cannot avoid being a prophet, a reformer, an enemy of the present by proclaiming the beauty of the future. Those of my former literary friends who were mere artists and æsthetes denounced me as a moralist, a preacher, a hypocrite, a poser.

One of them, the most gifted and influential, lost his moral balance entirely. In his temporary madness he heaped on me an amount of invective, and delivered, in the most inferior sort of poetry, a torrent of such abominable abuse as was probably never equalled in any civilized country. And such is the servility of some people to the autocracy of genius that these aberrations were taken seriously by his admirers and created a sphere of animosity, a prejudice, against me which has endured until this very day. From that date he and his adherents maintained that my force was spent, my talent lost, and that nothing was to be expected from me any more. As I continued, however, though wiped out by this verdict, to produce and to be read, they had to repeat their assertions every time a new work

of mine was issued. In this way I got an excellent training, and it is very difficult for any critic now to tell me anything worse than what I have heard many times before.

A remarkable incident may be mentioned here. That same man of genius who saw in me his worst opponent or competitor — I am not quite sure which he really considered me — now surrounded only by blind admirers, became an alcoholic of the worst description. It was indeed one of the most terrible cases I ever saw. He tried to commit suicide and was at last put into the lunatic asylum of Utrecht. From there he wrote imploring letters to me — whom he had insulted more than any living person — that I might come and deliver him. I went and saw him a few times and was convinced that the man could be cured. His friends and relations, however, who had locked him in, strongly opposed any such experiment. The doctors who had treated him unanimously declared his case incurable. Among them was one of our first experts in nervous diseases.

All this only stimulated my medical instinct. On my own responsibility and against the wish and advice of all his friends and doctors I took him out of the asylum and brought him to my own home. There I kept him for about six months and had the satisfaction to cure him entirely. Until this day, which is about twenty years later, he has been a

total abstainer and has had good health. His wonderful genius, however, was broken forever. Nevertheless — so great is the inertia of the human mind — he and his old friends still continue their former attitude toward me, though with somewhat more caution, telling the public, which is ignorant of what really happened, that it was not his but my talent that had suffered, and that I did not fulfil the fine promise of my youth because I did not acknowledge his superiority.

I have never given publicity to this incident until now, and only a few people in Holland know it. I am informed that those few explain my conduct as hypocritical affectation, as posing and wanting to play the Christ. It seems to me, however, that any good physician who saw such an opportunity as clearly as I did then would have seized it. At any rate if there was affectation the patient had all the benefit of it.

Not all my literary friends were bitter individualists and æsthetic egoists like this one. There were a few who felt the emptiness and provinciality of his sort of literary refinement. They wanted to get into touch with the principal current of life and to close up with the living stream of humanity. Yet they did not find the way out of their spiritual captivity by following the light of their own soul. They were swept by that side current known as Marxian social-democracy. Not able to free them-

selves by their own force they submitted to the influence of the powerful personality of Marx.

Karl Marx was certainly a man of enormous power and intellectual strength. Yet he stood with both feet in the swamp of materialism. In this he was representative of his time. In the middle of the nineteenth century, rationalism and materialism were at their highest point and pervaded all human thought and activity. Never could I submit to a mind, however great its energy and eloquence, that was entangled in such erroneous conceptions of life. To me it was turning truth upside down, explaining the higher by the lower, and taking all sense and significance out of the world.

In this resistance I stood alone among all my literary and artistic contemporaries. After the attacks of the æsthetic individualists I had to bear those of the fanatic Marxians. They are known the world over for the passionate violence, the party spirit in its worst sense, with which they condemn and abuse those who do not bend to their dogmas or kneel before their altars. I had my full share of their scorn, and was called Utopian, *bourgeois*, and the like. When I began my campaign as a social reformer — by trying to reform myself, and by calling for helpmates and sympathizers, I was denounced at once and unanimously by the social-democratic press as a foolish idealist and a deceiver of the people. The helpmates came

nevertheless and I was soon surrounded by a few enthusiasts who wanted to support my plan and to share my endeavours. But alas! there are friends more dangerous than enemies.

The thing I was about to do I had never done before. I was going into business. The strength of a business man lies in his social relations. He must know many people, and select them according to their value. Now the people I knew could be of no service to me. They had come to me as to a poet or a doctor; they were artists or invalids. Therefore when, in my fortieth year, I made a new move and went in for production and commerce, I found that I had no friends whatever in the world of business. This explains a great many of my troubles.

The distance between the different "sets" in society is enormous. In the world of poets and artists things are discussed and believed that would never enter into the mind of a business man. On the other hand, the business man in his narrow sphere of interest has no idea of the delights, the freedom of mind, the wide vistas of the poet or artist. They neither understand nor trust each other.

My plan was folly in the eye of the business man. Not one, of course, tried to help me. Yet I wanted their help most of all. For living by personal productive labour is made the easier according as more producers join on common ground.

Those who wanted to join me were the most unfit for the work. There was a poor painter with a large family who wanted to paint — of course — and live as cheaply as possible. In his leisure hours he would plant and dig. There were some young poets attracted by the romantic side of living in a hut in the woods; there were some delicate persons, neurasthenics or overworked people, who thought that a country life would benefit their health; there was a kind of shipwrecked genius with great eloquence, lofty ideas, and very little efficiency, with debts and half a dozen ill-bred children; there were downright scoundrels who tried to fool me and to have an easy life at my cost; there were poor land labourers, so poor that the simple life I could offer them seemed a luxurious existence; there were — worst of all — social fanatics, with a number of “principles” for which they were ready to suffer but which resulted in making others suffer more than they did themselves.

From the very beginning my dealings with business men were unlucky. I bought the place, which is still in my possession, from a man who was at that time my patient. I had cured him in a very short time from a painful disease that made him unable to walk more than a few paces. He had sought in vain for a remedy during several years with the most renowned doctors, spent great sums of money for cures, and had even submitted to a

dangerous operation, all without result. So when I had cured him — and the cure has lasted to this very day — he professed the utmost gratitude and expressed his desire to give me a princely reward. I had no capital at that time, but I induced a friend of mine, a lady of great wealth who was an enthusiastic idealist, to buy the estate for me. I said I would buy it back as soon as I got money myself. I asked my patient, the business man, what sum he wanted for his estate. I knew that he was in bad straits then, and I supposed he would be glad to accept a fair offer, and I counted on his gratitude not to cheat me. The sum he named was rather high, but I concluded the bargain at once, without bartering. This conduct seemed to him so extraordinary that he grew very much excited. I saw his face grow pale and his eyes glitter. He supposed I must be mad or very rich, and then he tried by all means of tricks to get more out of me. He made an exorbitant note of extras, old furniture and so on. I grew indignant at this sort of gratitude and refused to give in. From that moment my grateful patient became my bitterest enemy, who did me all the damage he could.

The wealthy lady, who had bought the estate, married, and her marriage seemed not to increase her idealism. First her relations, and then her husband, came to the conclusion that she had done a very foolish thing. Her original plan to come and

live at the estate herself she had given up, and as I had not insisted on a very strict contract, they threatened to drive me off. After some trouble I succeeded in finding another friend who enabled me to buy the place for myself. Until to-day I have not been able to pay the money back; for, though some years later I got a rather considerable sum by inheritance, my rôle as a capitalist lasted only a few months. By that time I had started the big co-operative experiment in Amsterdam which is described in another chapter. And just at the moment when I became rather well-to-do, and when the productive settlement was beginning, an unforeseen catastrophe descended upon the big organization and swallowed every cent I had.



## CHAPTER III

### A LITERARY EXPERIMENT

**I**T HAS been for a long time a serious puzzle to me how it came that, although I tried honestly to employ my powers in the most useful and efficient way, I found myself one of the most isolated, most violently attacked and insulted personalities in my own country. Until my thirty-second year I was rather popular in Holland — more so than my contemporaries. I had practically no enemies. In my forty-fifth year I stood entirely alone; whatever I did was ridiculed; whatever I wrote was vehemently denounced; whether I had supporters I could not tell, because they kept cautiously silent, and those few who pretended to be my friends did more to ruin me than my enemies.

The public said of course that it was all my own fault. No doubt they were right. If I had wanted to keep my popularity I ought to have acted differently. The question was whether the way they wanted me to go was the right one for me.

In regard to this matter I may relate a little psychological experiment which I made just at the

time when the star of public favour seemed to be setting, and which led me to very curious and instructive results. It gave me, once for all, an astonishing revelation about the value of literary judgment and public opinion.

The first men who had turned against me were my literary friends. The most prominent and influential of them, in fact the acknowledged leader, who is still considered by many as Holland's greatest poet, is the man whom I mentioned in the last chapter as having eventually become my patient. I will call him X.

X. had apparently the qualities of a genius. He could write beautiful verses and excellent critical prose. He represented the revolutionary spirit in our rather dull, conventional literary world. The great public of course did not appreciate him, but he was the hero of the select few among the younger generation. He and I were of the same age, and he called me his best friend. I did not know that my greater popularity was soon to make him jealous of me and cause him to assume an attitude of critical superiority.

After a few years of collaboration I perceived, however, that there were deep and essential differences between us which could never be overcome and which would lead inevitably to a separation. Though he held up the great figure of Percy Bysshe Shelley as his ideal poet, he lacked entirely Shelley's

burning love for humanity, his fiery passion for right and equity, his ethical beauty. That finest quality of the poet, the prophetic strain, I failed to see in my friend.

To be a prophet means also to be a moralist. And the moralist is always a hateful sort of individual. The conventional moralist is indeed the worst enemy of the true prophet. At a youthful age it is exceedingly difficult to distinguish between the two, and still more so to vindicate the right of true ethics to exist in the prophet and in the poet without taking the unpleasant and unsympathetic attitude of a preacher of morals. The disadvantage of my position as an opponent to X. was that I was the preacher of morals.

X. considered himself, like Nietzsche, "beyond good and evil." This may mean that the poet, the true prophet, has not to take into account the morals of the multitude. So far he is right. But in that case he has to show that he possesses his own standard of ethical perfection, the power to stand alone by his own moral code, the gleam of intellectual beauty that may give a new lead to mankind. I could find nothing of the sort in my friend. He denied all necessity of restraint; the expression "a good man" he declared to be meaningless; he exalted hate against love; his life was a display of reckless egotism and debauchery; he drowned his wonderful talents in alcohol. And yet his admirers did not

forsake him. On the contrary, his unconventionality impressed them not merely as the mark but as the prerogative of true genius. Such is the tendency of youth to break conventional bonds and to follow the prophets of Liberty.

At first, one of our circle resisted — one of the best. He was rewarded with a torrent of invective in wild, passionate poetry. The rest of us did not well know the origin of the quarrel and believed in X., who said he had been cruelly wronged. But it was very remarkable that from this time his attitude as a critic changed and that he condemned and ridiculed every new line of that other poet who had dared to quarrel with him.

Then I felt that it was to be my turn. I persisted in writing in our review what I considered right and true. And I felt that by the influence of X. a spirit of animosity was awakened. A silent tension grew daily around me. I got warnings of a change in the general feeling toward me in our literary circle. I expected an attack and I thought it wisest to make it myself.

I wrote an article of rather sharp criticism against myself. It was done in full earnest. Every author can do it. We all have our moods of self-reproach, of self-correction, in which we sit trembling before the judgment seat of our own conscience.

I wrote without pity, sternly and unflinchingly. I analyzed my deepest motives, I compared my

avowed faith with my actual deeds, my high ideals with my unsuccessful attempts. I wrote like a well-meaning friend who, though unsparing, believed in me and wanted me to be what I wished myself to be. I did not write in a despondent or morbidly bitter mood, so there was nothing in my tone of that deadly poison of disbelief and distrust that sometimes makes an apparently gently written page paralyzing and murderous. It was the sort of criticism that I ought to have welcomed and enjoyed, however harsh in appearance, had it come from somebody else. Moreover, it was well written, a very creditable piece of clear and fluent prose.

Through the mediation of an accomplice in The Hague I sent this article to our review with a polite letter, under the assumed name of Lieven Nyland.

The meeting of the editorial staff of the magazine, in which the article was discussed in my presence, was for me exquisitely and delightfully amusing. They all took the matter very seriously, as a most unpleasant event for myself, and they did what they could to attenuate the blow. Yet it was only too clear that they enjoyed that piece of prose far better than they cared to show me.

"Rather impudent," said one, "to send this to us!"

"Not so bad, though, in the matter of style," said another, with a glance toward me, to see whether

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I was hurt by this partial compliment to my supposed foe.

"Ever heard of this man?" asked X. But nobody had. "Of course we won't take it," he continued.

"Why not?" I ventured to remark.

"You don't mean to say that you would agree to our bringing out this article?" said X. in the utmost astonishment.

"Surely I do. It is a good piece of work."

"That's fine! that's very fine!" they all exclaimed.

The article was accepted with general satisfaction, my satisfaction having a very different cause from what they supposed, and theirs being concealed under an assumed air of polite indignation and opposition. I am sure they did not believe then in the sincerity of my approval. They took it either for a stratagem to make them refuse the article, or for a piece of posing, a sham magnanimity. This certainly was the case with X., for, ever since then, it has been his tactics to represent me as a hypocrite, a preacher, a poser, and a very vain man. In this way he could always explain away my dangerous sincerity.

When the number of the review was issued, with the article in a conspicuous place, I had a good time, all by myself. Nobody, not even my own family, knew the secret, except my accomplice in The Hague. Everybody expected me to be very much

depressed and beaten down by such a violent attack in my own review.

"How well you bear it!" they said to me. "But it is an awful shame of your staff to let that thing go into print. It is low and treacherous."

"But I agreed myself."

"Of course. *You* could not oppose it. But they ought to have refused it. It is a great shame."

Then I asked as many people as I could speak to, including even the patients in my clinic, whether they had read the article and what they thought about it. The notes I took of their answers made a very interesting and instructive record. Most people, meaning to please me, said that it was an abominable and worthless piece of writing. It was clear to them that the writer could not even write our language, that he was an arrogant, ignorant, unfeeling brute, and that his article was rubbish. Among all the readers I found only *one* whose judgment was fair and right. This was a young girl of eighteen, not at all a literary person, and as far as I knew not unkindly disposed toward me and my work. She alone astonished and pleased me by saying simply:

"You must excuse me for my frankness, Doctor, but I think the article very good. That man means well, and in your place I should feel obliged to him. And I think his article is admirably written. It is

a splendid piece of criticism, and I can well understand that you did not refuse it."

I shook her hand warmly and said: "This is the best praise I ever got in my life." Then I told her that I was the writer.

To all others, however, I kept the secret carefully. Perceiving the blindness and insincerity of so many on whose judgment I had laid value thus far, I resolved to play the trick a little farther.

I had ready in manuscript a new work of art, a prose poem, now well known under the title of "Johannes Viator." It was done in a new style and was quite unlike anything I had written. It was a vigorous and ample vindication of my opinions about the ethical mission of the poet. It had in it the prophetic strain and was in direct opposition to the opinion and attitude of X. and his partisans.

Of this work I selected two chapters, characteristic of the book as a work of art, but not yet displaying its whole tendency, and I sent them to X., the secretary of our editorial staff, as a contribution to our review. I again used the assumed name, Lieven Nyland and acted through the mediation of my accomplice in The Hague. Soon afterward I got a letter from X. telling me that he had received a contribution from my enemy, Lieven Nyland; that this man proved to be a very remarkable writer, and that his work was excellent. He hoped that my personal feelings would not



induce me to oppose this contribution, though it came from a man who had treated me so severely. He expected me to be broad-minded and magnanimous. I asked him in return to send me the manuscript. As soon as I got it I locked it up and kept silence. I knew enough.

At the next meeting of our editorial staff there was something of a row.

"Did you not get the Lieven Nyland manuscript I sent you?" asked X.

"Oh, yes," I said indifferently.

"Well, where is it?"

"Where is it? In the hands of the author I suppose."

"In the hands of the author? What does that mean? We want it."

"I don't think so," I replied.

"*You* may not think so, but you are prejudiced of course. It is a very good work indeed, and you had no right to send it back."

All the others expressed their disapproval of my high-handed and arbitrary conduct.

"Well, then, gentlemen, if you think that work so valuable and want it so much for our review, you had better try to get it back from the author."

After that I left the meeting.

My accomplice at The Hague, who was a lady, had given her own address for the Lieven Nyland correspondence. One morning, looking from her

window, she saw, to her great dismay, the well-known figure of X., accompanied by a devoted friend, coming down the street toward her house. She had just time to hide herself and to give orders to the servant that when the gentlemen came to ask for Mr. Nyland the answer should be that Mr. Nyland was abroad.

The gentlemen inquired indeed after Mr. Nyland; they asked about his situation and occupations; they wanted to know where he was and when he would come back. The servant could give them but scant information, and certainly not the object for which they came, the so much desired manuscript. At last they went back disappointed, and my accomplice left her hiding place.

At the next meeting of our staff I told X. that he would lose his time and his money by hunting up Mr. Nyland and his manuscript, because Lieven Nyland was an assumed name of my own. I told him that the manuscript was safely locked up in my desk and that I felt no inclination to publish it in our review.

The effect of my words was very curious. In the first astonishment X. did not realize that he had given himself away entirely, and that I had him, so to say, in my pocket. His immediate feeling was admiration for the successful trick. He patted me on the shoulder and said: "Well done! Good for you!" in full sincerity. And all the others, un-

consciously obedient to their leader's mind, complimented me warmly.

This was the last editorial meeting I attended.

Very soon X. began to see that he had been badly worsted in the game. I suppose he expected me to publish the whole story and make him and his partisans ridiculous. Such a thing, however, had never entered my mind. What I did was done for my own instruction. I had acquired the knowledge that I wanted. I had got the purest criticism on my work that I could wish for, and a clear insight into the state of mind of X. So I simply took my dismissal as an editor of the review, and published my book on my own account. The truth about the Lieven Nyland incident became known only to a few immediately related to it.

And then — this is the worst part of the story — X., feeling safe again and seeing that I took no advantage of my position, filled a whole number of the review with the most sordid and violent abuse of me and my new book. All his pent-up hatred and jealousy, all his bitterness and rancour he poured out in the most vulgar and brutal way, assisted by some of his supporters, who went, of course, still farther than their master.

I was called *Johannes Violator* instead of *Viator*; my book was called filth and rubbish which contained not one single page of merit. For months at a stretch X. published a series of what he later

called "ironical poetry," but what was in fact the lowest and most miserable kind of rhymed abuse a poet ever indulged in. In fact he was then in a condition of irresponsibility produced by constant intoxication. To those who had, after his example, complimented me, he explained later that I had done it all out of sheer vanity and desire for notoriety; and he has succeeded in maintaining this reading of the case among his admirers until this very day.

Relating the story now, after twenty years, for the sake of its psychological interest, I think I am to be blamed for not having fought the fight rigorously to an end at that time. I did not defend myself nor did I make a legitimate use of the things I knew in order to show the insincerity and worthlessness of the criticism of my antagonist. My attitude was that of philosophic pride disdaining to enter into combat with antagonists so undignified and so little responsible for their words. I felt sure that all people of good taste and common sense would distinguish on whose side was the truth and the right. But in this expectation I was sorely mistaken. I did not know then, as I do now, the spiritual servility of the human mind, the general desire of men to submit to authority as much in purely æsthetic matters as in social activity. I had not yet learned to see mankind as essentially a gregarious race, submitting to any leadership that declared itself with sufficient determination, and

unheeding whether the dominance was due to real superiority or to reckless arrogance.

X. was considered at that time the æsthetic leader, not by the great public of course, but by the select few of the younger generation, and his wild outburst against me, his brutal condemnation of my work, sufficed to spoil my reputation as a poet and an artist for at least twenty years. In spite of the indignity of the attack and the pitiful condition of the critic himself, all respect for me and for my work was entirely shattered, and the most insignificant writers felt themselves entitled to speak of it with utter contempt.

To this original attack and to my deplorable neglect of a vigorous self-defence I can trace back all my subsequent difficulties not only in literary matters but also in social reform. I had seriously weakened my position and had given occasion to every opponent to make sport of me.

X. afterward made amends in private, never openly. After his recovery from the malady caused by his debauchery he succeeded in reëstablishing, to a greater or less degree, his literary influence and position. He became an ordinary, fashionable critic and reviewer of literary art. He still conducts his review. His aberrations are all forgiven, though he never tried to retract or correct them. As a poet he is more popular than he was in his best time, and few people are able to see that his literary

powers have left him, and that because of his lack of self-restraint he never deserved the name of great poet and spiritual leader.

This was the great lesson I had to learn: that mankind wants authority, even in spiritual matters; that the great majority follow the few, and that those few follow the leader who energetically maintains his superiority and fights for his position. And this also I learned: that we should not be too superior, too disdainful of self-defence, or too Christian-like, too generous and forgiving, especially when we have to defend our art, our ideas, which are general and belong to mankind. For the unscrupulous will take advantage of us, and it is not only ourselves but mankind that we are thereby causing to suffer.

I have been too much of a Tolstoyan. And I made Tolstoy's mistake in my experiments for social reform with the same undesirable results, as I will presently relate.

## CHAPTER IV

### CURING BY SUGGESTION

I HAVE mentioned the fact that when I was a boy of fourteen I suffered for some months from an ulcerous inflammation of the eyes. My parents took me to our specialists, but without any result. Seeing no betterment and hearing the report of wonderful cures effected by a certain untitled and unaccredited doctor, they resolved to try him — and I won't blame them for it.

This doctor was a quack, an ignorant old fellow who examined his eye-sore patients with a huge cigar in his mouth; he had a row of mysterious bottles on his table, with big Roman figures on the labels, but they all probably contained the same stuff.

He said that he would give my eyes "beefsteak" in order to strengthen them, and he bathed the eyes with some cool liquids from the bottles. Moreover, he prescribed salt to be taken in great quantities, because salt "preserves," as he expressed it. And yet, wonderful enough, I never left his dark, dingy, crowded little consultation room without great relief. My eyes became better.

The conversation in that room, during the long hours that I sat there and waited and listened, turned upon the wonderful cures effected by the old quack, and the infinite harm done by the great, renowned doctors of the medical profession. Every one of the sufferers had a tale to tell about an eye spoiled or lost by the operations and the vicious poisons used by the men of official science. When his "beefsteak" and salt did not benefit the clients who had first visited the regular doctors, the little old quack cleverly said that it was only because they came too late for him to undo the harm inflicted by his titled colleagues. My relatives came to believe later that the little scar left on my eye was due to the scientific treatment, and would not be there if I had gone first to the quack.

That the old man cured some of his patients there is no doubt, however many eyes he spoiled. Certainly he did to me what the learned specialists had not been able to do. Twelve years later, when I went to study the method of Dr. Liébeault at Nancy, I learned what power it was that worked these wonders.

Dr. Liébeault used this same power, but scientifically. He gave no "beefsteak" and salt, but he treated every patient in the presence of all the others, the conversation always turning upon the wonderful cures effected, though with much less abuse of official science, for Dr. Liébeault never de-



nounced his colleagues. He thus produced in his consultation room a *suggestive atmosphere*.

When Liébeault retired as a practitioner, in 1891, a dinner was given in Nancy in his honour. Physicians came from all parts of Europe to honour the founder of the famous school of Nancy, the initiator of suggestion as a method of curing disease. A bronze statue, representing David and Goliath, was presented to him, and the modest man was assured of the veneration and gratitude of thousands of disciples.

And yet the way in which Liébeault was treated by his academical colleagues is thus described by Dr. Hilger:

“Though Liébeault never indulged in complaint or bitterness on account of the neglect he suffered from his academical fellow-workers, and only quietly insisted that his results should be investigated thoroughly and without prejudice, they had nothing for him but a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders and shake of the head. For fourteen years the patient doctor worked on, under neglect, contempt, and derision, until in 1880 an old college friend of his, Dr. Lorrain, visited him and fixed the attention of Professor Bernheim on his remarkable cures. Bernheim, who at first was as skeptical as the others and could hardly suppress a pitying smile at his first visit, became soon deeply interested in what he saw, and then felt the greatest admiration for the good and simple man who had endured for so many years the foolish misjudgment of his colleagues without one word of bitterness.”

Then Bernheim wrote his standard work on the application of suggestion to the cure of diseases.

One instance of his application is that of a cure effected by Professor Hirt, the famous neurologist of Breslau, in 1890, on the son of the Privy Counsellor, Professor Dr. Klopsch. The boy had been suffering for eight years from attacks of coughing, which were so bad that the patient weakened and became exhausted; he could not attend school, nor follow any regular occupation; rest at night was impossible for the family as well as for the sufferer. Every method of treatment was tried in vain — electricity, baths, cauterization of the nose — and finally the best authorities declared it a case of incurable disease of the lungs.

One afternoon Professor Hirt tried the method of Liébeault; by a few passes of the hands and by verbal suggestion he brought the patient into a light slumber and assured him that he would sleep well that night and that the cough would stop. This one simple treatment sufficed for a complete cure. The boy slept that night, his cough stopped, and never reappeared. He became a completely healthy man.

If this boy had been surrounded by people who believed the newspaper advertisements and had talkative neighbours, and had not been treated by a broad-minded man like Professor Hirt, the parents would have dismissed the doctor and spent their money on patent-medicines; then they would have hunted up all sorts of quacks, faith-healers, and

more or less obscure miracle-workers until they struck one who did by accident what Professor Hirt did by scientific knowledge. And the result would have followed that the parents, and the neighbours, the boy himself, and hundreds of people would have testified to the wonderful powers of that quack who could cure by one stroke a case considered hopeless by the greatest authorities. And no derisive denial could have had the slightest effect upon one of the many who had seen it.

Doctors talk of "the dangers of suggestion." But the real danger, if anywhere, lies in the use of suggestion by the quacks, and in its unstudied denial by men of science.

This instance happened nineteen years ago. The attitude of the medical profession of Europe is wiser now. My colleague, Van Renterghem — who twenty-three years ago started with me the first clinic in Amsterdam for the treatment of diseases by suggestion, according to Dr. Liébeault's method (called *Psycho-therapy* by us for the first time) — sees more patients now than ever and finds no opposition worth mentioning among his fellow-doctors. Cases were referred to our clinic by our colleagues; we even had several doctors as patients; and we treated successfully the wife of one of the professors at the University of Amsterdam. A more remarkable case was treated lately by Van Renterghem at a university clinic, where a serious

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operation was performed without any anæsthetic except suggestion. The same change in attitude is observed in Germany, England, Sweden, and other countries, where the method has been adopted by men of the highest standing.

In America there seems to be a curious mixture of backwardness and advancement. Psychotherapy was studied in America years ago, and yet the medical profession as a whole seems to be either entirely ignorant of the subject, or indifferent to it. The only doctor of high standing who took up the practice in New York tells me that his colleagues have just ignored the whole matter, with an attitude of "lofty indifference." One of them said: "Doctor, if you would only discover something about a brain tumour or describe some organic cord lesion, that would really be doing something worth while."

When I lectured in a city of the Middle West before an audience of university students and reminded them of the errors of official science and the danger in entirely denying the cures of quacks instead of investigating them, a doctor stood up, white with indignation, and said in a tremulous voice: "Sir, you are trying to make quacks of all of them!"

This sort of emotional opposition is raised to its highest pitch when one dares to maintain that suggestion may have influence on diseases generally called organic, physical, or anatomical. The case

of the coughing boy will not make the conservative doctor angry. He will only say: "That was but a nervous trouble; I also have seen such cases and cures." But when it comes to the possibility of curing an inflammation of the eye, an ulcer of the leg, or malaria, or pneumonia — this is downright heresy.

If we admit that the trouble of the boy was entirely nervous, had he therefore no right to be helped in the only way that could help him? There are thousands of patients who, like this boy, can be helped only by suggestive treatment. And because the medical profession considers this treatment below its dignity, who can blame the patients when they go to the quacks; and who can blame the quacks when they eagerly make use of the advantage given them by scientific prejudices, and practise the treatment that cures, though they do not know how and why? The heaviest responsibility falls upon the men who ought to know better — the dogmatists among men of science — and it is nothing but dogmatic superstition to deny, *à priori*, the cure of organic diseases by suggestion.

It can be safely maintained that where there is any chance of cure at all, that chance may be increased by the use of suggestion.

As a matter of fact, the doctor never cures a disease; he enables the body to cure itself by assisting it in the struggle against hostile influences or dis-

turbances. Even the surgeon does no more than remove obstacles; the cells of the body do the really curative work. And in this work they are directed and assisted by what we call the *psyche*, that part of the body which is not directly perceptible by the senses.

There is no breach between physical and psychological functions; all are in constantly related action and counteraction. It has been demonstrated that sight of food by a dog immediately stimulates the secretion of the different glands necessary for the digestion of that special kind of food, not only in the mouth but also in the stomach. Now, if the visual image alone can have such very material effects, in such appropriate selection, what can be the scientific objection to the possibility of the cells being stimulated in their curative work, appropriately and effectively, by imagination, by emotion, or by volition?

This is the way in which suggestion works. By verbal persuasion, by exciting the imagination of the patient, by raising his expectation, by giving him confidence, by strengthening his own power of volition, the idea of cure is fixed in his mind and the curative action of the cells is increased and lengthened — even in such a “physical” case as a broken leg, or an ulcer, or a wound. In this there is nothing unscientific, nothing contradictory to our present knowledge of the human body. In

fact, psychical things are just as real as physical things; but as the chain is long and the links are very complicatedly connected, we are not accustomed to realize the first influence of one upon another.

There are certainly dangers in suggestive treatment. I know of unscrupulous doctors who, for the sake of experiment, have entirely enslaved their patients and even tried, in order to see how far suggestion could lead, to make them do abnormal and immoral things. They ordered them, for instance, to steal some object. And the theft was committed without the criminal knowing who put this idea into his head. This sort of human vivisection cannot be too severely condemned. I make it a strict rule never to treat a patient against his will, nor to give any suggestion that might lead to abnormal consequences, and never to weaken his will-power or lessen his independence. The patient ought never to be put into a deeper sleep than is necessary for effective treatment, and he must be taught to become independent of the doctor. The doctor is only the guide who indicates the way to self-cure, and should not step in unless the patient is absolutely unable to get out of trouble himself. Some hold that it is always better to bring about the deepest form of sleep and the highest degree of suggestibility; they believe that such a complete control of the patient enables them always to restore

a perfect normal balance after the treatment. But I have found that this complete control generally leaves a greater aptitude to being controlled, and in this way diminishes the stability of the psychic balance.

Psycho-therapy is dangerous in the hands of unskilled, ignorant, or unscrupulous persons, be they doctors or laymen. But is this not the case in all branches of the medical profession? Is there no danger in poisonous drugs, in chloroform, and the knife? Do we not trust ourselves entirely in the hands of the surgeon, and is there not just as great a chance of his being ignorant or unskilful or unscrupulous? It may be replied, not unjustly, that we can more easily find a reliable surgeon than a trustworthy expert in psycho-therapy. But if this be so, who is to blame? A few centuries ago surgery was considered below the dignity of a physician, and left to the barber, the market-crier, and the quack. The poor patients paid the penalty, but who was to blame? So long as official medical science refuses to study the science of psycho-therapy, with all its powers and dangers, they will leave the field to the mountebank, the fake, and the quack.

The mischief done by ignorance of psychology — the ignorance of well-established facts by men who ought to know — is enormous.

It is now more than nine years since Binet pub-



lished his standard work on Suggestibility, and yet I found the most crude notions prevailing in America on this important subject. Suggestion is still confused with hypnotism. Suggestibility is still looked upon as an abnormal and morbid quality found only in hysterical women, more or less connected with spiritualism, mysticism, and other disreputable isms — therefore better left alone and unstudied.

Binet experimented with healthy children of an ordinary school class. He found that suggestibility — the aptitude of taking and realizing suggestions — is a normal faculty of the human mind, but greatest in youth. He was able to express this faculty for every child in a certain figure, which he called the coefficient of suggestibility. In one of his remarkable experiments with these children he submitted to their attention several familiar objects, such as a stamp, a coin, a picture, a portrait, and then asked them to describe these objects from memory. He found that by a certain impressive way of questioning he was able to falsify their memory to such an extent that the great majority described things which they had not seen. He asked place and date of the postmark that was on the stamp — though the real stamp was clean and unused — and more than 98 per cent. of the children were unable to resist this mild form of suggestion: they described the postmark which they had not

seen at all. Of 143 children, only two had enough independence of judgment to answer directly in the negative. The 141 others had not the originality to rely on their own observation and memory, and not the courage to suppose that the professor would ask a misleading question.

You are, in your turn, invited to reflect on what is happening daily in courts and in police headquarters when some of those whose suggestibility coefficient is high — some of the 98 per cent. non-resistants — are submitted to the “mild suggestions” of a questioning police officer, a coroner, a judge, or a lawyer. I remember quite well that when I was a boy of ten I was questioned into a guilt, being entirely innocent. And though it may be true that suggestibility lessens in riper years, we may be quite sure that at least 50 per cent. of the average of men retain enough of it to be entirely unreliable as witnesses under the suggestive pressure of a headstrong policeman, a pompous judge, or a shrewd lawyer.

And your juries — is not the jury the safeguard of democracy, the pillar of justice? We have no juries in Holland, and I never met a Hollander who wished to have that democratic institution back. The makers of our constitution have cleverly forestalled this result of modern psychology, that the coefficient of suggestibility of a body of men like a jury is greater than that of the best individuals

among them. The judgment of one judge is generally more reliable than that of a jury.

The soul of a child, and in lesser degree of the grown-up man, can be shaped by suggestive influence in any form; it can be bent, crooked, twisted, adulterated — morally and mentally — to an extent depending on its degree of plasticity, its inborn original force of resistance, and the power of suggestive forces at work. The definition of suggestibility, as given by Bernheim, is "the aptitude of the mind to receive an idea, and the tendency to transform it into action."

Now, every phenomenon of consciousness (emotion, expectation, imagination, reflection, volition) is a suggestion; and there is a rule in modern psychology which says that every idea tends to become active. So the latent possibilities of effect, to good or to evil, are always there.

Another general mistake is to consider suggestibility as an entire mental and psychical quality, and to confuse it with credulity. But suggestibility is not credulity. I have had very skeptical patients, who — mentally — did not believe in suggestion at all. They were entirely incredulous — and yet they could feel physical relief by suggestion easily enough. Nor is there always exact relation between strong-mindedness, robustness of health, independence of character, and that important plasticity which we call suggestibility.

Bernheim has succeeded in accelerating or slackening the pulse of a normal individual simply by counting to him. The pulse was registered by the sphygmograph — without the person seeing it — and it quickened from 80 to 90 when Bernheim counted 120 a minute, and it fell to 74 or 73 when he counted 60 a minute.

Not only the personal will of another but also routine, expectation, fear, and imagination can act as suggestions and have physical effects.

The method of Dr. Liébeault is based on the fact that plasticity is greater during sleep, or even light slumber, and that the physical, curative effect of suggestion is increased when you succeed in reaching the patient's mind, or soul, during his sleep or half-slumber. That this is possible is known to every mother who talks to her child in half-slumber or even in deep sleep. She can often get an answer from a child apparently unconscious, and implant a simple idea or a command which will be duly followed, though the child seems to have wholly forgotten it after waking up. In old age many peculiarities of the child come back, and I have observed old people sometimes accepting suggestions with a childlike docility, though of course not with the physical plasticity of youth.

Old people, though in all appearance still independent and responsible, are often entirely under the suggestive influence of some masterful or in-

terested person. I have seen cases of rich old men, apparently normal, who acted entirely against their original character, against their true inclinations, against their own interests, under the influence of some nurse or attendant who had succeeded in mastering the master's mind. In such cases the intriguer knew how to apply his suggestions so as to rule at last the whole household, cheating the legitimate heirs out of their rights or bringing about a marriage contract.

Here again we see the abuse of a powerful and dangerous instrument in the hands of an unscrupulous person. And there is no possibility of guarding society against this, unless these forces are thoroughly studied and methodically handled by the men of science.

I was often asked what I thought of all the various movements, now springing up everywhere in America, all more or less connected and held together by the great principle that the Mind can heal the Body — such as the Emmanuel movement, Christian Science, faith cure, the now extinguished movement of the Zionists of John Alexander Dowie, and several more or less secret associations. My answer was that religion and science to me are one, and that I must consider all these movements to be aberrations in so far as they deviate from the great common scientific unity of human wisdom. But in the same way as the Church must be held re-

sponsible for all heresies — because it was narrow, blind, and dogmatic, instead of alive and universal — so our modern science is the direct cause of all these aberrations, because it has been dogmatic and prejudiced.

The Emmanuel movement may keep contact with science, yet it is not scientific and would be superfluous if science were what it ought to be. The other movements mentioned are all tinged by the influence of some powerful — but not always well-balanced or overscrupulous — personality. This means suggestion, personal suggestion, spreading over hundreds and thousands, making use of the gregarious quality of mankind.

Man is a herd-animal, and suggestibility is a necessary condition of the gregarious habit. This enables some individuals of a masterful, energetic character, even without really great qualities, to become the leaders of numerous followers, and often the healers by suggestion.

These movements are extremely deplorable, because they generally bring a sort of spiritual despotism, servility, and fanaticism, and because they lead thousands and thousands astray from the safe ways of universal science.

But it is entirely futile to combat these people simply by haughty contempt. Their cures are facts, sometimes, and science can do their creed and their leaders no greater service than by stupid denial.

The only way to correct these aberrations is to use their weapons better than they do. So long as the doctors doggedly stick to their drugs and pills, to their electricity and operations, denying and neglecting the psychical treatment, just so long will quacks and faith-healers and the like flourish, to the detriment of mankind. And patent medicines will enrich their advertisers just so long as the power of suggestion is not understood. Any advertisement is a suggestion. Repeat it sufficiently and it will tend to become action in the reader. He can't resist; he will try it, if only for once.

But expectation is also a very strong suggestion. What a sufferer has read about the pills or drugs, what some friend or neighbour or relative has told him about their wonderful effect — that will be the result, to a greater or less extent. He will experience relief, perhaps a total cure, and his testimonial will help to enforce the suggestion on others. Let the doctors thunder against these cures and call them the result of imagination; what is the use? "Let it be imagination!" said a patient to a doctor. "If it cures me, when you could not, then I prefer imagination!" Look at the tremendous sums spent on advertisements: you may be sure they pay, but it is the suffering public that pays. And they would certainly rebel, if the results did not reinforce the suggestion.

Even the doctors themselves are sometimes dupes.

Every year scores of new proprietary medicines come from the chemical manufactories, endorsed by a number of favourable testimonials from physicians. After some time they are forgotten and replaced by something else with still more striking endorsements. Are these physicians all bought to give false testimonials? No; but nobody thinks of the part that suggestion plays. Nobody, not even the doctor himself, asks for test-conditions which exclude suggestive influence. Expectation gives the first suggestion; a favourable result based thereon enforces it; and advertisements do the rest — exactly the same as with patent medicines. The difference is in the long chemical formula and the scientific label.

Psycho-therapy is no panacea. It is only an accessory force which must be combined with surgery, hygiene, electro-therapy, hydro-therapy, and the rest.

It is to be hoped that American science, which counts so many illustrious names in all branches, will soon atone for the long years of prejudice and neglect, protect society from the dangers of suggestive influence, and serve it by its wonderful powers.



## CHAPTER V

### THE INFLUENCE OF SOME FRIENDS

**A**FTER my first lecture in London, on psychotherapy, a lady wanted to speak to me and invited me to her home in the country. This home proved to be one of those magnificent country-seats which may be considered as one of the highest achievements of culture and refinement to which human civilization has attained. A splendid house, built in noble style, furnished with exquisite taste, containing priceless works of art and an unlimited number of books. It displayed quiet luxury, which, without extravagance, afforded not only comfort but also real intellectual and artistic delights. There was nothing to shock the eye; a well-established order, a truly aristocratic atmosphere, the evidences of self-control, and of mental labour and healthy sport were at hand to balance all the dangers of wealth.

This beautiful home seemed indeed to come as near human perfection and the earthly paradise as man could hope for. Yet, notwithstanding its dazzling appearance of beauty and happiness, I never

forgot that it could not be built on foundations of equity and justice. I knew that, at the bottom of this glorious estate, there must exist something rotten, even though it could not be perceived, in the stately manor or in the thousands of acres around it, or in the seemingly happy and contented population — just as I know that the same must be the case in all that the powerful English nation has achieved and in all that the still more powerful American nation is going to achieve. Piracy, parasitism, clever extortion is at the bottom of great ownership. Thousands of poor wretches have to pay, with all the miseries of a sordid, incomplete life, for the perfection of these few. I knew this, and I said it. This will not be considered exactly the right sort of conversation for a week-end guest at an English country house. It might not seem likely that the invitation would be repeated. Yet it was repeated.

During the time of the Boer War, which was a terrible time for a Hollander who had beloved English friends, I wrote a letter to that same hostess of mine, who belonged to the highest English aristocracy and of course to the Tory side, a letter so free-spoken that a friend of mine to whom I showed it exclaimed: "If she stands *that*, she must be a very extraordinary woman."

And she stood it, for she *is* a very extraordinary woman indeed. It hurt her grievously, and so it did me, for there is nothing so painful as to see how

the deepest friendship cannot prevent the deepest misunderstanding. Yet it brought no separation, no animosity. Our conclusive sentiment was that of Professor Richet, who exclaimed at the occasion of that horrible war: "*Pauvres êtres humains!*" Poor human brutes! entangled in error and misunderstanding, killing each other, killing poor innocent women and children, convinced of the justice of their cause on either side. Error and misunderstanding — these are indeed the common enemies we have to fight. And to that tremendous struggle is devoted the entire life and strength of Lady Welby, my hostess at the magnificent country house.

Though she is now over seventy, and frail and ailing, she never relaxes but continues her work with unbroken energy. After the death of her husband she left the manor, where she had to fulfil her duties as the wife of a wealthy English aristocrat, and she retired to a smaller house with her books and her papers, sparing all the strength left to her for her great task, seeing nobody but those whom she hopes to interest in her work and those who are to benefit by it.

Forty years ago, while living in an atmosphere of courtly splendour, traditional state and formal religion, this woman, who was of a deeply religious nature, struck upon this great truth, the fundamental truth of the present period in human history

— that we human creatures are miserable because we have not sufficient means of communion with each other.

We suffer, hate, and quarrel, because we can neither rightly think, nor communicate our thoughts. For in order to think and speak we use words and language. And words and language in their present state are absolutely insufficient means for what we try to do with them. They are corrupt, petrified, stale, full of snares and pitfalls, full of antiquated images, dead and stony, instead of living and spiritual.

This is indeed the clue to most of the present human miseries. It explains all the religious quarrels which led to so much cruelty and bloodshed, it explains the political struggles, the wars of nations, the social and economical troubles. For at the bottom of all is the want of communion between man and man, not only between strangers, but even between brothers of the same house. They all fight because they think differently. And yet these differences of thought and feeling, of volition and intention, can all be traced back to the inadequacy of language.

To prove this has been the life-work of Lady Welby. The amount of evidence she has collected for that purpose is gigantic. Men who have known Darwin and his methods say that his work only can be compared to the labour done by this extra-

ordinary woman. She has published a few books, and her branch of science, which she calls "Significs,"\* begins now to gain official recognition. But the fruits of her tremendous labour are as yet stored up in her library at Harrow. Let mankind take care lest this great treasure be lost or scattered unused. For in the face of the facts contained there it cannot be denied that men have been fools indeed, and that they are now only slowly growing aware of their foolishness. And is it not the first condition of improvement to get insight into one's faults? Is not a true diagnosis the first requisition for a cure? To me the friendship of Lady Welby and the acquaintance with her work have been of immense importance.

As a poet one must have intuitive knowledge of the fact that our mind is outgrowing our language; that our implements for thinking and communication are ridiculously primitive and clumsy in comparison with the subtle realities we have to deal with. Every true poet feels this and his longing is, more or less vaguely, for some better means of understanding, for a transcendent language, meeting our needs of transcendent knowledge.

Yet it is a different thing from feeling all this vaguely to go at it with full conviction and show it with forcible arguments to poor, struggling mankind.

A universal insight of this truth, with all the authority of an acknowledged science, would mean

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\**Significs and Language*, by V. Welby [Macmillan, 1911].

more than a thousand peace conferences, it would unite the now contending forces of religion and natural science, it would do more to establish a higher human wisdom than all psychical research or theosophical teaching. For in truth, according to my experience, we can divide all humanity into two classes: Those who are enlightened enough to recognize the inadequacy of language, and those who are not. The first class only can build up the future of the human race. On them only, and their consequent action, depends the hope of our salvation. For is it not true that the teachers of religion and the teachers of science are both working for the truth? They use the same word. And yet do they *know* with perfect clearness what they both mean by that recklessly abused word?

All political leaders, all social reformers are struggling for the sake of human happiness. But have they the faintest notion what the word "happiness" really can signify for all who use it?

How far Lady Welby's proposals for a remedy will be successful, I consider for the moment an irrelevant question. What I hold to be of the very highest importance is the insight she tries to bring into the intricate mazes of our endless errors, into the deep confusions of our troubled selves.

Welby's life-work and activity is the highest example of what the world may expect from women. It is the best and the final answer to the woman

question. It shows how a woman, after fulfilling her duties as wife and mother, may enter a new and far more important field of activity at a time when, according to the old opinion, she was spent and useless: it shows how she may add to the store of human wisdom her own special treasure of intuitive knowledge. And this without losing any of her essentially feminine qualities, or trespassing unduly upon what belongs to the male. Was this fact not anticipated in antiquity, when deeper insight into matters human and divine was ascribed to saintly women, who, in losing their physical maternal powers, became like holy mothers of the race?

Without doubt the Western civilization of our days is too rational and intellectual. It wants correction by intuitive insight — not by the wisdom that *knows* but by the wisdom that *is*. We are overconfident in our learning and in our technical power; yet we are lacking in the highest human qualities, in the poetry of life, in transcendental wisdom. We shall have to correct and complete our modern acquirements according to the standard of former ages and of other nations that possessed the advantages which we have lost. The human beings of antiquity and of the Middle Ages, and also the Oriental people of to-day, are our superiors in inner accomplishments, in transcendental perfection, in those individual qualities that we are replacing now by a materialistic science and a formal,

clerical religion. Yet our gain is a better outward union of the nations, brought about by our mastery over the forces of nature, by our swifter communion, our stronger physical unity, our universal scientific insight of nature.

In a very remarkable speech at the Psychological Congress in Paris in 1900, a noble representative of Oriental civilization expressed the rightful wish that Occident and Orient might understand each other and might learn from each other's methods. Both clauses of this wish are incomplete, the Orient is stagnant, the Occident is pushing on through blocked road. Only by combining the two civilizations can mankind reach that real culture which has been lacking until now. The man who said this was called Yagadisha Chattopadyaya, and he made upon me the impression of a complete and finished man, because thus far I had seen either invalids, unfinished specimens, or caricatures of the human race.

This Indian, a Bramin of Benares, was still a young man, and he had good looks, a fine build, and perfect grace in manners and movements. In the midst of the horrid black coats, unshapely trousers, and ridiculous top hats of the learned men at the congress, his exquisitely beautiful and graceful dress made him look like a lily among cabbages. I had been myself a vegetarian for some years, and had found it difficult to remain so. This Indian had



never polluted his lips with flesh nor with alcoholic drinks. His gentleness, his mild, quiet ways, his distinction and the depth of his thoughts made me feel ashamed for the presumption of our Occidental people who claim the highest place in human civilization. In the short time of our acquaintance we were daily together and I became very much attached to him. Of course, as I do always, I saw his best qualities first. I have no doubt he has defects to counterbalance them. But he went to his fatherland without showing his weaknesses, leaving me only the remembrance of his virtues.

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## CHAPTER VI

### THE GREAT STRIKE

I HAD entered now into the labour movement, into what may be called militant socialism. I never cared for labels, nor for party programmes, but it seemed that by my own development I had landed in the midst of the class-war.

For the first three or four decades of my life I had, like most other people of the leisure class, been only dimly aware of the way in which our comfortable life was made possible. We live, it seems more or less, in a state of somnambulism. We may be said to know but not yet to feel or to realize the injustice of our position. A slight shock to our mind is sometimes able to wake us up and open our eyes to the disagreement between our confessed morals and our actual mode of living.

It is a curious fact to me that this shock did not come in my case through so-called "scientific" German social-economical theories, nor through the writings of the great Russians, Tolstoy and Kropotkin, but from the American side, through Bellamy's "Looking Backward" and Thoreau's "Walden." I

sometimes felt a little humiliated that such a superficial and unpoetical book as "Looking Backward" was the instrument of my evolution. Alfred Russell Wallace, however, the famous explorer and biologist, one day told me to my consolation that he also was made a socialist by that same simple, silly, little book. It was the clear common sense, the cheerful optimism of the American author, that gave the slight shock wanted. And however different in many respects my views were from those of Thoreau, it was by the touch of his strong character, of his sincerity, uprightness and determination, that my thoughts became deeds. For this transition is not at all a scientific, rational process, but a moral event. Its motives are not knowledge and learning, but freedom of mind and cheerful hope. The pushing force comes from the men of faith and of force of character. The mind may be prepared intellectually, but it wants ethical incitement to change its potential energy into active movement.

I delivered at that time two addresses which were my declarations of War and Independence. The first was spoken before a public of fashionable, peaceful citizens of Rotterdam, in an old-fashioned, respectable lecturing society bearing the proud name of the "Company for the Promotion of Common Welfare."

I had given as a title of my lecture "On What Do We Live?" And a large audience crowded the room

expecting to hear from me, the well-known doctor and specialist, a useful and instructive speech on the mysteries of nutrition, on what a man ought to eat and not to eat, on protein and nuclein, on fat and starch. Great was their surprise when I told them frankly and forcibly that all men, the lecturer included, lived on theft and deceit, on piracy and robbery, on usury and monopoly. For the moment they were impressed, even to the point of applauding, and the chairman told me they hoped to see me again. He was much blamed for that saying afterward. The papers next morning flamed with indignation, and the "Company for the Promotion of Common Welfare" had no use for me after that day.

Later on, in the country of Bellamy and Thoreau, I had many experiences of the same kind. My ability to promote physical health met with more approval than my power of promoting spiritual welfare, and audiences stood with much more ease and patience any remarks about hygienic trespasses than about social inequity.

The second lecture was intended for the labourer and was named "For Whom Do You Work?" In that one I pointed out that it was very unreasonable and foolish for the workingmen to blame and abuse the idle usurer, and yet continue to work for him. If their contention was true that the members of the leisure class did live like useless parasites on

the work of the labourer, then it was a shame and a sin to build houses, make clothes, raise food for them. There was no use in calling them names, I said; the only right way was to leave them alone to work for themselves. Is it true that the labourers are the only useful members of society? Well, then, their device ought to be to work only for those who work for them — workers for workers — and let the idler starve.

The labourers listened and cried "Hear! hear!" The social-democrats called me a *bourgeois*-utopist, and other murderous names, but nobody could show me in what I was mistaken, nor why my rational advice could not be followed. I had to find that out all by myself.

Of course the labourers wanted me to show them how they could manage to work only for workers. My answer was simple enough: "Produce yourself what you want, and live on what is produced by you and your fellow-workers." The same method I had recommended to our Government when it was embarrassed by the unemployed: "Give them the opportunity to produce what they want." This advice was also utterly disdained and ridiculed, though nobody could tell me why it was so absurd or impossible.

I knew quite well that there would be many difficulties in the execution of my plan, yet the idea I knew also to be quite sound. If the practice was

difficult, all the more reason why we should go to work and try to face the difficulties.

This was the theoretical basis of my social experiment. And I can honestly declare now that it brought me all the knowledge I wanted, however much of a failure it seemed to the outsider. I wanted to know why my simple maxim had not yet been put into practice, what was in the way, and how it could be realized. I daresay that I do know at this time.

The trouble was with most people who agreed with the truth of my proposal, that they had no idea of a gradual transition. They supposed that a few men could at once live up to the theory entirely. This could be done only if the men were heroes and strong characters like Thoreau. If a few men could either reduce their wants or extend their productive power sufficiently they would make both ends meet. To them even the difficulty of acquiring sufficient means for producing would not be insurmountable. They would have to reduce their wants a little to bring them within the scope of their productive power and in that way create a surplus, a margin of what might be called "profit" or "extension-capital." This surplus would increase at a growing rate, as they drew more fellow-workers into their circle, and in the end it would enable them to buy as much land and as many implements as they needed to produce all the necessities of modern life.

What I had yet to learn was that the power of mankind, either to reduce their wants or to extend their productivity is extremely limited. I did not realize then that men are, for the most part, gregarious animals, who cannot reduce their wants unless it is done collectively, and who cannot extend their production, unless their activity is cleverly directed by superior minds.

The labourers had no idea of this either. Most of them who listened to my advice and agreed with my idea did not believe at all in the necessity of authority and discipline. They were fed on the idealistic wisdom of Tolstoy and Kropotkin, who believed in the superfluity of all authority and in the beauty and blessing of full anarchism; or else they were flattered and spoiled by the speeches and pamphlets of social-democratic and anarchistic demagogues who had told them that they needed no practice and no help from superior minds. The only thing for them was to have political power, the power to rule by law or to do away with all laws; then everything would come right by itself.

From such glaring absurdities I tried to lead them to practical experiments. This was why the social-democrats called me a misleader, an "enemy of the people." It was natural that they should distrust me because, when the people followed my way, the absurdity of the plan of the demagogues would become rather too obvious. If the labourers could

not, by their own effort, organize effectively so as to extend their productive power and to meet their wants, even on a small scale, there was little hope that they would be able to do so as a whole, at once, after having acquired political powers. It would be clear then that they need the help of superior individuals of the ruling class, of organizing minds that could direct their activity and maintain authority and discipline.

I succeeded in starting a company called the "Company for the Common Possession of the Soil." Its aim was to acquire, in the first place, the means of production — the soil, source of all wealth — by the efforts of well-organized productive labour. My plan was to start small groups of workers, who should produce those necessities of life that all the others wanted, and who should reserve the profits of their business, or at least a part of them, for the acquisition of land and implements, and for the starting of new groups. The end would be a large coöperation, productive and distributive, consisting of workers who lived on their own soil and who themselves supplied all they wanted.

To me it was clear — and is so still — that such a body would be economically the most powerful on earth, able to cope with every trust and even with every political power, a constant source of unlimited wealth, having in its midst none of the worst evils of our present society, no pauperism, no unemploy-



ment, no theft, and a good deal less crime, disease, insanity, and despair.

It is interesting to know that this company, which was started in 1901, still exists. Hollanders are a curious people. They are very slow and suspicious. You may offer them a bone of truth a long time before they will take it, but when they do seize it, they cling like a bulldog, however bare it may prove to be. The "Company for the Common Possession of the Soil" has not yet any possessions at all; it even lost the soil which was given to it. It consists of a few producing groups, who are struggling hard for existence, but who nevertheless have faith and hope, as may be seen in the monthly paper that they publish, *The Pioneer*.

Of course their trouble is the lack of able leaders, of clever, experienced business men, as every American understands. I have told them so over and over again since I came to see it myself. They do not, however, seize upon the new bone I offer them; they are unwilling to give up their old, bare dogmas of socialism; they still believe that the labourer has to liberate himself without help from the intellectuals who belong to another class, and that authority and discipline in business matters always lead to abuse and extortion.

Nobody who joined me in 1901, not even the intellectuals, understood the experimental character of my work. Nobody had that spirit of scien-

tific exploration that is always ready to give up old tactics, to make a new move, to leave a hypothesis that proves useless for a better one, to seek incessantly new methods, new ways along the line of least resistance, and that finds in negative results no reason for discouragement, but useful instruction and suggestions for new and better plans.

In January, 1903, when my experiment at Walden was going on fairly well, when we had just begun to find a source of increasing revenue in the baking and selling of an excellent sort of whole-meal bread, a railway strike took place, which almost entirely isolated the capital of the Netherlands for two days from the rest of the country. A most curious sight it was to see the business men of Amsterdam who had their homes in suburbs or villages some ten or twenty miles from town crowding the country roads — on foot, on bicycles, or in hired vehicles of various descriptions — all looking very cross and out of temper because they could not reach their offices in time. To most of them it was an astonishing revelation of the importance of railway workers. The leaders of the strike, who had been able in this way to stop business at the capital, became at once men of note, though of a most unpopular sort.

As the blow came unforeseen, and found the Government unprepared, the strike was eminently successful. The railway company and the Govern-

ment gave in and agreed to the rather moderate wishes of the strikers. Engine-drivers decorated their locomotives with roses after the victory.

As soon as peace was settled, the prime minister proceeded to establish a law that would in the future prevent such humiliation of the highest authority. When this law was discussed in Parliament, another strike broke out, this time meant to be general, in order to oppose the passing of the bill.

As chairman of the "Company for the Common Possession of the Soil" I was supposed to be on the side of the striking labourers and I was invited to take part in the organizing of the great strike. And I agreed to do what I could — not because I had any great expectations concerning the practical results of the strike, as I knew that many of the socialists had, who hoped for a total overturn of the social system — but because I expected that many of the best strikers would come to my conclusions—namely, that it was necessary for the labourer to tackle the great problem of the organization of production before he looked for the possession of political power. In this expectation I was not disappointed.

At the preliminary meetings all the socialistic groups forgot their differences and met like brothers on the field of battle. Anarchists, social-democrats, and free-socialists all promised to stand together. It was a complete rally. My most violent opponents, the Marxists, shook hands with me, and a

fine spirit of brotherhood and hopeful enthusiasm prevailed.

About forty of us were sent as delegates to different towns to lead and encourage the strikers there. The password was given and a date and hour secretly appointed. On Monday morning, the sixth of April, 1903, no train was to run on any railway in the Netherlands.

Sunday evening I set out, as one of the forty delegates, on the warpath. I took leave of my family, filled a suit case with pamphlets and fly-leaves, and arrived in the middle of the night at the little town of Amersfoort, an important railway junction, to bring my message from headquarters that a strike would be declared that night in the whole country. Expecting the Government to be very active and energetic and not unlikely to arrest me, I took an assumed name, and was dressed like a labourer.

The attitude of the railway-men at the night-meeting where I presided was very fine. I was much struck by the unwavering courage, the generous sentiments, the cheerful energy of these people, who all knew that the existence of their wives and children was at stake, and who, having just come from a strenuous and long day's labour, went to work the whole night to prepare the great blow. I saw what excellent material these men would make under a strong and clever leadership.

But alas! no such leadership directed that great strike in Holland in 1903. The organization of the movement was poor, there were no funds, Government and railway company had made their preparations, there was a great display of military forces, though only one shot was fired, and that by accident, and there was a sufficient reserve of blacklegs. The strength of the labour union of railway workers was thoroughly undermined by methods of intimidation and bribery.

I stayed a week in that little town, living in the houses of the strikers, sharing their meals and their hours of suspense and anxiety. There was a dark, dingy meeting room where they all preferred to gather, rather than to stay at home. The women also regularly attended these meetings, sometimes bringing their children, and they all sought the comfort of being in company, talking of hopes and fears, cheering each other up by songs, and trying to raise each other's spirits during the long days of inaction. I addressed them, three or four times a day, trying to give them sound notions on social conditions and preparing them for the defeat which I soon knew to be inevitable. I may say, however, that, though I was of all the forty delegates the least hopeful of ultimate success, my little party was the last to surrender and showed the smallest percentage of fugitives.

I saw in those days of strife that of the two con-

tending parties, the stronger, the victorious one, was by far the least sympathetic in its moral attitude and methods. The strikers were pathetically stupid and ignorant about the strength of their opponents and their own weakness. If they had unexpectedly gained a complete victory they would have been utterly unable to use it. If the political power had shifted from the hands of the Government to those of the leading staff of that general strike, the result would have been a terrible confusion. There was no mind strong enough, no hand firm enough among them to rule and reorganize that mass of workers, unaccustomed to freedom, untrained to self-control, unable to work without severe authority and discipline. Yet the feelings and motives of that multitude were fair and just — they showed a chivalry, a generosity, an idealism and an enthusiasm with which the low methods of their powerful opponents contrasted painfully.

Every striker had to fight his own fight at home. Every evening he had to face the worn and anxious face of his wife, the sight of his children in danger of starvation and misery. He had to notice the hidden tears of the woman, or to answer her doubts and reproaches, with a mind itself far from confident. He had to fight in his own heart the egotistical inclination to save himself and give up what he felt to be his best sentiment, solidarity, the faith toward his comrades.

I believe no feeling man of the leisure class could have gone through a week in those surroundings and taken part in a struggle like this without acquiring a different conception of the ethics of socialism and class war.

For on the other side there were the Government, the companies, the defendants of existing order, powerful by their wealth, by their routine, by their experience, and supported by the servility of the great public and the army. They had not to face any real danger (the strikers showed no inclination to deeds of violence), and the arms they used were intimidation and bribery. The only thing for them to do was to demoralize the striker, to make him an egoist, a coward, a traitor to his comrades. And this was done quietly and successfully.

Demoralizing the enemy may be the lawful object of every war — the unavoidable evil to prevent a greater wrong; yet in this case, where the method of corruption could be used only on one side, it showed the ugly character of the conflict. This was no fair battle, with common moral rules of chivalry and generosity; it was a pitiful and hopeless struggle between a weak slave and a strong usurper, between an ill-treated, revolting child and a brutal oppressor, who cared only for the restoration of his authority, not for the morals of the child.

Every day when I walked through the streets of the little town, at the head of my strikers, we saw

the inhabitants look at us with derision and pity. They called us *stakkers* (poor fellows) instead of *stakers* (strikers). We were in connection with headquarters by messengers on bicycles. We had also post-carrying pigeons, but they were of little use, and once an automobile brought news from headquarters — all sorts of doubtful information: for instance, that the Government was going to surrender, that a large gift was expected from a wealthy man, and so on.

In the meanwhile trains were running on the track busily every day. We heard the rumble and the whistles day and night, and I remember how every whistle in the night used to wake me up, as it meant another blackleg or fugitive returned to his post. The strikers, however, told each other that this whistling was only a trick of the company — making empty locomotives run up and down the track with as much noise as possible, in order to impress the strikers with the notion that regular service was restored.

On Tuesday every striker got a note from the company saying that, unless he called at his post within twelve hours, he would be irrevocably locked out. At the next meeting all my men came, not one missing, and the notes were solemnly burned. This was like the burning of their ships by the Greeks. It was now victory or starvation.

On Friday I felt that all was lost. No tidings



from headquarters, no money-supply, the service — notwithstanding the rumour of several wrecks by untrained officials — apparently running as regularly as usual. At noon a man came, by train, with a message from headquarters, bearing the word that all was lost and that we must give up the strike. A foreman of the strikers who had stood by me all the time with the utmost energy, cheerfulness, and enthusiasm, broke down at the news and sobbed with his head on his arms. The others were quiet and resigned. No word of bitterness or despair was heard, no blame to me or to the leaders. On the contrary, at my request they all stood up and sang the socialist march.

I went at once to the station-master to try what I could do for the locked-out victims. The man played his little comedy. When I spoke of the lost strike, he said:

“Strike? What are you talking about, sir? I do not know of any strike. The service is going as well as ever. There have been a few fools who left their posts, but they have been warned, and are now replaced by others.”

The man was not so bad as he looked, however; he felt more in sympathy than he was allowed to show. Yet he could do nothing. He wired to the board of the railway company, and got an audience for me the next day. There I went, with an address in my pocket, signed by all my strikers, and worded

as submissively as the circumstances made necessary and as their pride would allow. I pleaded with all my eloquence for the forty families who were led by me into starvation. In the whole country the number was over two thousand. I spoke about the noble sentiments and the good cause of these strikers, about their attachment to the company and the railway, about the danger to the service in taking untrained novices, about generosity and pity.

But the gentlemen of the board had their hour of revenge. They had not forgotten the humiliation of January. They wanted to rub it in thoroughly this time. To have me, one of the socialist leaders, in their midst seemed to give them great satisfaction. It was something of a treat to them to see how heavily I felt the burden of responsibility, full as I was of the impressions of those days spent among the victims of the unequal struggle.

Yet they were not the stone-hard, brutal sort of business men that I have met in other countries. They spoke of humanity, of order and duty, of patriarchal relations between employers and workmen — they were more narrow and hypocritical than coarse and cruel. The result, however, was thoroughly negative, and when I felt that any appeal to generosity was as useless as if I were speaking to some feline animal, I told them a bit of my mind and the scene ended rather dramatically.

After that I had an audience with a minister of

the Government, who was exceedingly urbane and polite, and whose talk drifted into sociological and philosophical currents, without bringing any more hope.

And I had to return again to my forty families, who had placed their confidence in me, and who were looking anxiously for my return, gathered in the dark dingy meeting-room, each time that I had set forth on another fool's errand.

From a practical point of view the company received advantages from the strike. They ran some danger, and had indeed a few wrecks, because of their untrained workers, but on the other hand they had the opportunity to get rid of a number of aged and half-efficient persons, without obligation to give them the pension for which they had contributed all their years of service.

The leaders of the defeated army and the forty delegates then got together in another meeting which became notorious in Holland as the "night-meeting" after the strike. It lasted from twilight till day-break, and came nearer to my conception of a "pandemonium" than anything I have seen in my life. As an experience of crowd-psychology it was unrivalled. During the first three or four hours there were regular speeches, wherein of course each leader of his party threw the blame of the defeat on the other party, the anarchists and free-socialists.

being particularly violent in ascribing the whole *debacle* to treason of the social-democrats. The fact was that the social-democrats, being more practical and clear-sighted, had sooner realized the hopelessness of the struggle and covered their retreat. The anarchists, however, who had fought to the end, found it bitter to state the pitiful result of the best chance they ever had.

And then, after these speeches, the rest of the meeting was one continuous uproar for hours at a stretch. I saw men grow so excited that they did nothing but howl invectives with the regular repetition of a machine, tears streaming down their drawn, pale faces. I suppose in America the end would have been shooting and killing. In Holland it was only howling, threatening, and breaking of chairs.

In thinking it over now, the most wonderful thing to me is that, although I was present at that meeting all the while it lasted, it did not seem particularly long. It continued full ten hours, and most of the time nothing happened but howling and shouting. One would think this beyond the power of endurance of a normal nervous system, at any rate too much for human patience. Yet in the first light of morning I rode on my bicycle to my home fifteen miles away and did not feel especially tired; I was able to go to my daily work as if I had had a good night's sleep. There seems to be something bracing in an

atmosphere of extraordinary excitement, however useless and confused it may be.

I had succeeded, however, in the very last hour of the meeting in mastering the clamour for a while and in making myself heard. I pointed out what had to be done next, as the most urgent duty — namely, to seek help for the two thousand starving families.

This was agreed to, and I was appointed, with two others, to form a committee of support.

*His feliciter peractis*, as Cæsar would say, the shouting done, and the committee nominated, the generals and captains of the lost battle felt their minds relieved and went back to their wonted business, each according to his party programme, the social-democrats preaching politics, the anarchists preaching anarchism and general strikes, while the care of the victims was left to me and my two fellow-members.

One of these fellow members was the keeper of a small restaurant in Amsterdam, a shrewd, funny Jew, rather popular among the labouring class because of his good humour, his jokes and cunning stratagems. He had made a reputation by out-witting the fiscal officials to the advantage of poor taxpayers, and he had all the lively eloquence, the tender-heartedness, the vanity, and the swaggering propensities of his race. Apparently much flattered at having been given, in companionship

with me, the enormous task of providing two thousand families with means of subsistence, he went to work with a really astonishing energy and inventiveness.

We began with Amsterdam, and divided the town into five districts, in each of which we organized a meeting, addressed the people in order to explain our plan, and appointed a sub-committee. Then in each district we selected some of the locked-out strikers and made them call at every workman's house, and also at the houses of the wealthier people, and ask them to give a regular contribution every week, with a minimum of five cents, for the relief of their locked-out comrades. In this way we got a list of contributors varying in number between two and three thousand, who provided us every week with a total contribution of about a hundred dollars. This was not much, but it was something. We could establish a head office and use several of the unemployed as agents, collectors, and clerks.

When this canvassing had gone on successfully for some time we felt that we ought to do something more. The number of contributors had reached its maximum and would surely decrease after the first impulse of generosity had relaxed. We wanted to keep our subscribers, and I saw in this loose organization the possibility of establishing a market for the products of my coöperative and productive groups.

My fellow member, the inventive restaurant keeper, who, as he said, knew Amsterdam and its population as he knew his own pocket, recommended the following device: Instead of simply collecting the weekly money and distributing it to the poor families, we should keep it and do business with it, after the manner of a savings bank. Every contributor was to receive a stamp representing the value of his contribution; he was to stick this stamp in a small booklet. When his booklet contained a sum of at least two dollars he would be able to exchange it for some article of his choice, some piece of household furniture, which we could offer him in the showroom of a store established by us.

This idea worked successfully — so successfully that it would seem marvellous to some one not acquainted with the habits, the way of living, and the psychology of an Amsterdam household. The lower classes of Amsterdam — that is, by far the majority of the population — have to live on a weekly salary that is never quite sufficient for their wants. With the strictest economy they have to spend at least seven dollars a week, although the average wages are about five. How they manage to live is in most cases a mystery, but it is quite clear that they can never save in the form of money. They always have small debts to landlord, baker, and so on. Yet they want from time to time some

household goods, a new carpet, a chair, a clock. They buy these in small stores on credit, having to pay them off in small payments during many months, paying of course exorbitant prices for bad goods. In the same way young couples who establish a household bring themselves into debt sometimes for years to come.

Now our method offered them the occasion to get these goods by small payments in advance. Saving five cents a week at home is an impossibility, because the five cents is always wanted ere the week is at an end. Bringing five cents a week to a savings bank is not worth while, the housewife has no time to spare. But our collectors came every week and took the five cents and stuck the stamp in the booklet, and then after some months, without feeling the expense, the so much desired chair or table or carpet could be chosen in our store at a reasonable price.

The readiness with which the people gave their money implied confidence in our solidity and honesty, although, as the appointed committee for the support of the locked-out, we got this confidence in full measure anyway. My name was well known, and the trust in me, alas! so great that I felt it heavy to bear. My shrewd fellow-member realized the value of my name better than I did myself. During my absence abroad for a few weeks he used that name freely, with a characteristic lack of discretion,



and with only too great success. In the space of a few months the organization grew as a snowball grows to an avalanche. The number of contributors rose to more than forty thousand — nearly 8 per cent. of the population of Amsterdam — and soon we had to establish agencies in all the principal towns of the Netherlands.

Thus far I had not felt the slightest misgiving, or seen any imminent danger. On the contrary, I approved entirely of all that was done and saw a chance for brilliant success, a market for our production, a source of increasing capital. For our calculation showed clearly that we ought to make profits. We were doing business with advanced money, having to pay no interest, and being burdened with no expense except that of collecting.

What I did not foresee was that business people would not be interested in what interested me, would not share my faith, and would absolutely refuse to help in any way.

What I wanted now was the assistance of a firm, experienced business man. We had to buy and sell goods of all descriptions, furniture, clothes, boots and shoes, fuel, and so on; and we had to rule a rather unruly and untrained band of employees, consisting of railway-guards, engine-drivers and men of all trades whom we had turned into shop-keepers, clerks, collectors, and the like.

My acute restaurant keeper began to grow nervous.

His favourite expression was "gigantic," and he had always been talking of the gigantic things we were going to do. But when the proportions of our undertaking began to grow in full earnest it was rather too gigantic for him. In the beginning, so long as the organization had a more familiar character, he could manage to keep his authority, with his jovial ways and his jokes. But now he felt that he lost his hold on the men. They would not obey him and grew impertinent. Once a man to whom we had refused a coveted appointment began to swear and shout for twenty minutes at least, threatening to kill my poor fellow-director and drink his blood.

After this scene he lost his nerve altogether. With a pale face he said to me: "It requires a Napoleon to conduct this business. I think we better stop." To this proposal I did not agree. I preferred to go on and look out for a Napoleon. Even if I had wished to show my heels and fly, it would have been very difficult. For my worthy fellow-member had taken care to put my name and person forward on all occasions and to shift all responsibility on me. For I had some financial credit and he had none.

So one day my companion wrote to me that he resigned his post, and he returned to his restaurant, where he sat all day and brooded and talked to his customers, foretelling my inevitable ruin. Half a

year later, probably recovered from the shock, he started another organization of the same sort, entering into a most relentless competition.

The care of the original organization was now resting entirely on me, and I went in search of the Napoleon. This was no easy task, for reasons which I will presently explain. And when I got him at last, he skipped Marengo, and Austerlitz, and began with Waterloo.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE BREAKDOWN

**I**N 1897, when there was in Holland a general cry for help to the unemployed, the number of which then became alarming, as it has done and will continue to do in every crisis, I made a proposition to my countrymen that they should establish farms, owned and supported by the state, where every man out of work should be able to find useful employment, under good supervision and management.

They should produce principally those goods that they could use themselves, and work more for their own consumption than for the market, forming in this way a sort of productive coöperation. I foresaw of course that this would imply an annual deficit to the Government, but I considered this well-spent money.

This idea of productive coöperation as the only way to get out of our social troubles has indeed arisen in numerous minds and was brought forward several times. The difficulty does not lie in the way, which is easy to find and not so hard to go, but in getting people to try it.

State farms were recommended in Blatchford's well-known booklet "Merry England," but no Government ever dared to try the experiment. In Holland my proposal was haughtily declared ridiculous.

In 1830 William Thompson wrote a book called "Practical directions for the Needy and Economical establishment of communities on the principle of mutual coöperation, united possessions and equality of exertions and of the means of enjoyment."

It is still worth reading, as a sensible and natural answer of an unsophisticated, undogmatic mind to the alarming cry of the social miseries. It is full of good, even practical, sense. When Thompson died he left all his property in the hands of a board of trustees in order that they should try a practical experiment with it, according to his views. But Thompson's relatives interfered and started a lawsuit before the ill-famed "Chancery" of Ireland. The lawsuit lasted for seventeen years and then all the money was gone. The moral of this being that we should not try experiments after our death, with relatives and lawyers still alive. What Thompson wanted to do was a repetition of what had been tried by several social reformers, my countryman Plockhoy, who colonized in the seventeenth century in America, among the number. That so many experiments failed was no reason not to try once more. Yet Thompson's excellent advices were entirely for-

gotten by the uproar of dogmatists; by the Chartists movement in England, by the fierce, bigoted disciples of Marx in Germany.

I wanted to try my experiment during my lifetime, and the advantage of this was that I got the benefit of the instructive experience.

My reasoning went like this: It is impossible for any man in present society to give up all unfair means of getting his subsistence. He is dependent, in a thousand trifles, on the work of others. He cannot free himself entirely from the intricate tissue of social institutions and activities. He has to partake, more or less, and more or less directly, in all sorts of foul and mean devices used by merchants, landowners, industrial leaders, and others. The only way of keeping entirely free from direct or indirect swindle would be to live, like Robinson Crusoe, on your own patch of land, by the work of your own hands.

This was done, so far as I knew, by only one man, as the logical outcome of his severely just character. That man was David Henry Thoreau. And in honour of his high-minded example I called my place Walden.

But even Thoreau had to give up his heroic effort, and I did not at all agree with his contempt of machinery and modern industry. On the contrary, I wished to try, by bringing together several people with the same desire for justice as Thoreau had, to

alleviate the hardships of a sober life and to start, on a small scale, a newer, better organization.

It would be, of course, no complete change, but a transitional form, going as far as our personal endeavours would enable us. We would lessen the burden of social guilt weighing on our shoulders, by living as plainly and soberly as possible, and by trying to produce as much as we could of the necessities of our life.

We were to have the soil in common, to produce only useful goods that we could consume ourselves, to sell in the market what we could not use, and live as plainly as we could. My hope was that others would follow our example and by mutual coöperation would enable us to get more comfort, better production, and a larger market, among our fellow workers, for our produce.

There was a big house on the Walden estate, where one or two families and the unmarried people could live. Moreover, we built some six or seven smaller and larger habitations for the married people. Our principle produce was, in the beginning, vegetables. We also baked, in a very primitive oven, a pure kind of wheat bread, which proved to be excellent and was soon in demand by many customers in the near village of Bussum. By and by we extended the bakery and it grew very quickly into a fairly prosperous business which could keep the whole colony afloat. We began by giving wages on

a communistic basis, not according to the work given, but according to the wants of the worker and his family. This was kept up for several years, but it proved to be unsatisfactory. The bakers complained that the gardeners reduced their income by their inefficiency. We had soon to separate the two accounts and pay each man in his own trade what the sale of the goods would afford.

It lasted several years before the colony was self-supporting. And we had endless troubles and quarrels, most of them caused by the doctrinaires, who objected to all business methods as being "capitalistic," and who used all the power of insinuation and slander, when I had to compel them to leave.

As an experiment it was indeed very instructive, and it cured many a hot-headed idealist from his illusions about the possibility of immediate democratic or anarchistic régime.

In fact it very soon became clear to me that democracy and common ownership could not be realized at once, but had to be *learned* by a long, severe, and careful education.

The whole place, being considered as common property — though still practically my own — was badly neglected, everybody leaving the care to somebody else, and putting the blame on the others. I now saw and could demonstrate, plainly, how good and strict management is wanted even among



those who pretend to be socialists and upholders of liberty and democracy. Their idea of liberty amounted very often to doing as they pleased, which is not always as it pleases others.

I saw that they needed *authority*, that they had not yet become *of age* in the full human sense. They lacked the feeling of responsibility, the true knowledge of their own capacities, and the full self-possession that entitles to claim the rights of true liberty.

So, in order to keep the experiment going, I had to use my own authority, with the natural result that I was called a tyrant and a despot.

In all this, however, there was no real danger. Our deficit did not amount to more than what I could supply by my literary work. As I had kept the title in my own hands I could, one after another, supplant the useless workers by better ones. This was of course called a violation of the democratic constitution. But as I was paying the deficit, all were aware that I had a certain right to do this. In 1905, after three or four difficult years, things began to brighten up, and we commenced to make profits, especially through the bakery.

The little community at Walden then counted about fifty persons, women and children included; the whole area amounted to not more than twenty-five acres. Moreover, I bought a dairy farm of about fifty acres, and in the meanwhile started

the distributive coöperation in Amsterdam, called "De Eendracht" ("Unity"), which had become so alarmingly prosperous and for which I was seeking my Napoleon.

In my mind all this was one concern. I wanted to organize it all in one group, the products of bakery, market gardening and dairy farm, finding a market among the thousands of consumers of the "Eendracht," and the "Eendracht," on the other hand, procuring capital for the extension of the productive business.

This did not look unpractical or utopian at all. If conducted on safe business lines it would surely have succeeded. I had 40,000 contributors, a weekly collection of \$2,000, paid in advance, for which we provided the customers with shoes and boots, household articles, furniture, goods and clothes, fuel and other articles. We produced for them bread and vegetables, butter and milk. We had stores in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague, and agencies all over the country.

But this union, as it existed in my mind, was not understood and realized by the workers. The group at Walden did not care for the "Eendracht," which they considered too businesslike. There was no centralization, and there were no expert managers in the different branches. I had only locked out railway-men, engine-drivers, conductors, and the like. These were not even of the most efficient sort,

as the railway companies obviously had not unloaded their best men.

The result was that only a few branches of the business showed profits. The deficit at Walden never amounted to more than a few hundred dollars. I could afford to pay that. But after the first year the "Eendracht" showed a deficit of over \$6,000, and this was rather too much for me. Bad management, slovenliness, theft, in a big commercial concern, can make away with more money than I could procure by literary efforts.

I had regular meetings with all the workers and tried to make them understand that this was an educational experiment, and that as their theories proved false, we had to steer another course. I had now full proof that average people, even if they call themselves socialists, cannot make up, by common effort, for the want of commercial experience and authoritative management. So I told them I had decided to run the concern on strict business lines, as I could not afford to pay another deficit.

Many would think that I was fully justified, after this loss, to stop the business and withdraw. Yet this would have been extremely difficult. For not only would it have brought my employees out of employment again, but thousands of small contributors who had put their trust in me would have lost their savings. I could not have shown my face in Amsterdam after that. Moreover, as I told in another

chapter, I had just then become a capitalist, and I felt bound to pursue.

But then my employees, the locked-out strikers, began to obstruct me in my endeavours to help them. They called themselves socialists and were opposed to all "outsiders," as they called them. They were educated by platform-socialists, social-democrats, and anarchists alike, in the notion of "class-war," and this notion, whereto they clung fanatically, proved to be their own undoing. Any manager, being more or less a gentleman, a "*bourgeois*," was considered as a wolf in the sheep's stable. The good managers wanted of course a good salary and the employees objected to that. They all wanted the same salary whatever work they did. And this salary, in a concern that was not even self-supporting, could not attract first-rate managers.

In some respects these people showed admirable qualities. For instance, they all voted for reduction of their salaries when I told them that they had to choose between that and reduction of the number of employees. On the other hand, they were obstinately stupid in their opposition to "outsiders." When I had succeeded in getting a capable man — and I found more than one willing to work for a lower price than he could get in the ordinary labour market — the other employees began a regular war of obstruction against the hated outsider, until he

gave up the job in despair. These strikers used their old striker tactics against me, who worked only for their own benefit. This was the result of the teachings of the class-war socialists.

I struggled for three years, but of course the customers were ill served and the credit of the whole thing was badly shaken. The second year gave another deficit, though a smaller one. Then a man came who promised to set matters all right and he looked the man to do it. There was my Napoleon, turning up at the critical moment.

He was a fine young fellow, strong and energetic, with a face and manners inspiring confidence. He had been in different trades, and showed experience in all sorts of business. He was an expert in book-keeping and administration. His working power, as he told me and I had occasion to verify, was unlimited. He came to me offering me his assistance, out of sympathy and devotion to my cause, as he had perceived the straits wherein I was struggling.

As an autodidact he had rather a good opinion about himself and his abilities, but this I could easily forgive.

I began to use him as a private secretary, and in that occupation I could not find that he had over-rated himself, nor that his appearance was belied by his qualities.

He was accurate, active, full of initiative, thor-

oughly honest and disinterested, and his zeal to serve me was really touching.

Then I introduced him into the management of the "Eendracht" business.

Now this is a remarkable fact that subordinate workers have generally a very keen and quick intuition about the qualities of their leaders. They cannot formulate it, nor criticise justly, but they feel uneasy as soon as the man who is to lead them lacks the real power to do it.

In this case there was a strong opposition from a part of the workers to my young Napoleon. Only a few submitted willingly to his authority and became devoted to him. At Walden, where I tried him first, the opposition was so strong that he felt obliged to resign. But as these people objected to any leadership, it was not proof that they were right in this case.

In the "Eendracht," where anarchy had brought matters to such dangerous excesses, I felt obliged to maintain authority with a strong hand.

At a meeting of the workers I explained that they had to choose between my immediate withdrawal with all its consequences or absolute submission to the measures I felt necessary to take.

And all these men who had been so eager to take part in the management of the business now at once gave up all their rights, in order to leave the responsibility entirely to me. They submitted meekly and

my young ruler took the reins and began his work of reorganization.

In the first weeks all went marvellously. Some of the worst characters were dismissed, and perfect order began apparently to reign. My admiration for my helpmate increased, his activity was really astonishing. One other man of administrative power who had helped me thus far — let me call him M.— expressed his satisfaction at the new rule, and I felt confident that everything would come right at last.

Able business men who had dealings with our concern complimented and congratulated me with my young manager. He had winning ways and his assurance and decision convinced most people of his real abilities.

But fate was preparing a well-contrived and concealed pitfall for me.

I was well aware that the weakness of my young Napoleon consisted in his too great self-confidence. I also perceived his propensity to rather reckless and all too energetic measures. Yet there was the other man M., who was very intelligent, and though he had not the commanding and pushing force of the other, was the more careful, the more prudent, and in fact the more far-sighted of the two.

I succeeded in establishing good relations between these two, appointing to each his function, and then at last I felt relieved and at liberty to take a few weeks' vacation, devoted to my literary work.

I had a big drama in my head, a drama wherein the great struggle of humanity, the struggle between the two parts of mankind, the rich and the poor, the masters and the slaves, was represented.

This drama is called "Minnestral" ("Ray of Love") and was written in Langenschwalbach in Germany, in the six weeks during which my Napoleon was preparing his Austerlitz, which proved to be Waterloo.

The second manager M. was of a delicate constitution. The great strain of his work was too much for him. He fell ill after the first weeks of the reorganization and had to go to a sanatorium for consumption. He has died since. My young Napoleon was left entirely to his own devices. When I came back with the finished drama in my pocket I saw at once that instead of setting matters all right again he had struck the final blow and that the end was near.

My new general manager, instead of carefully limiting the business until the leaks were stopped, had extended it in a most reckless way, establishing a splendid new storehouse and buying up another firm, which had started a similar organization in order to run us down.

This competitive firm was started a year ago by the restaurant keeper who had been in our own concern but had deserted me. He knew our method and organization and imitated it with some apparent



success. As a matter of fact their structure was still less solid than ours. Not trusting my own capacities as a business man I had refused the temptation to buy up other firms, though I had several offers. And I had warned my new general manager. But he, conscious of his power and ability, was exuberant when our rivals, who called themselves "Volharding" ("Persistence"), came to him and wanted to surrender, as they felt they could not fight him. Very much flattered, he agreed to conditions which proved a monstrous swindle.

These two moves — the new storehouse and the buying up of our rivals — proved fatal. Moreover, the new general-manager had allowed the heads of some departments to buy on their own responsibility, without control, discarding the rule imposed by myself that all buying had to be executed — or O.K.'d — by headquarters.

Within six months of the new management the debts of the firm had grown from twenty thousand to a hundred thousand dollars, the weekly contributions did not increase, to raise capital under these circumstances was out of the question, and payments were stopped. In order to continue the sale of goods to the poor people who would have made a tremendous rush to get back their small savings, I could by earnest entreaty induce a meeting of the big creditors to give me a delay. They even consented to supply a part of their account as new capital. I

myself ventured another ten thousand to save the situation. I was then in my short career as a capitalist.

But it was too late. In another few months bankruptcy was declared. The judges convinced of my disinterestedness treated me fairly. They allowed a transaction which would have seemed very suspicious in any other case. The case was indeed difficult, as the 40,000 contributors who had all given small sums in advance had to be considered as creditors. Most of them were labourers, and to pay them off with 30 per cent. like the big creditors would have caused something like an uproar and would have discredited me forever — as they all had trusted in me. So I was allowed to buy from the firm all the stores and goods on my private name, promising thereby to pay off the big creditors with 30 per cent. and the small contributors with 100 per cent. Then the bankruptcy was raised. This transaction cost me \$100,000, but the small savings-holders were all paid off until the last cent and the confidence in me remained unshaken. I sold the shops and goods to different people, and the organization, in the form of a savings bank, to the young general-manager, in whose honesty I had always continued to believe. He is running that business still, and after the severe lesson which he had, at my cost, he now manages to make it pay. The stores are still prosperous, in other hands, and without any coöperative character.

The lesson was not less severe to me, as the sum I had to pay surpassed my means by more than half, and I, who had never any debt worth mention in my life, will be obliged to work very hard and live very soberly if I will see my debts paid off before I die.

The property of Walden became of course heavily mortgaged in the course of this affair. It never rains but it pours. An excellent manager for the Walden plant whom I had succeeded in getting accepted by the colonists took his leave the next day after my risky situation had become known. Then the colonists themselves began to make trouble. Out of my legacy I had built a fine new installation with electric power, providing the whole colony with light, which cost me some \$20,000. But the bakers for whom I had built it secretly established a smaller concern of their own in the village close by, and on the given day they removed, taking with them their savings and, what was more important, their customers, leaving on my hands a costly installation without workmen and without a market. In this way the only source of revenue which was left to me besides my own labour was dried up also. My short career as a capitalist had lasted about nine months and I had to begin anew, with a considerable account on the wrong side of my bank book.

All this was of course supremely unpleasant, especially because it touched my nearest relatives, whom I could not keep out of the trouble, and who were not

consoled by my belief that I had done something of importance and instruction for the benefit of mankind. They had to share my responsibility without sharing my convictions.

Had I been a young business man I would have considered it all as belonging to the necessary vicissitudes and hardships of the struggle for success. Many an experienced man of business, when I told my story, said, smiling: "Well, this is the usual apprenticeship, the ordinary school we all had to pass before we learned how to select and manage men, and to make a business successful."

To me, being devoted to art and science and beyond the middle of my life, it was a different thing. Most of all I was annoyed by the attitude of the public, who could not see, of course, that all this misfortune had nothing to do with the truth of my contentions, with the guiding principles of my endeavours, with the possibility of the thing I had in mind. They simply rejoiced because it all seemed to them, most unjustly, a decisive and convincing proof that I had been entirely wrong, that my ideas and aims were impossible and unattainable, and that I was nothing but a well meaning but thoroughly unpractical dreamer and schemer.

On the other hand, exactly because I was not a business man, but a man of science, and because I felt conscious of the purity of my aims, I found it all easier to bear.

In my medical practice I often had occasion to treat business men who were entirely broken down by the same sort of misfortune. Having worked strenuously for their own benefit, a serious failure made them lose all interest in life and see no other end but suicide. I had known such cases, being sometimes unable to keep them from the final act of despair. And I had smiled at them, wondering how a man could want to die in such an interesting position. This was what I said literally to the man from whom I bought the Walden estate.

And how far more interesting was this position to me who had never given much attention before this experiment to the financial part of life. It was all full of instruction, widening my views, testing my convictions, and surely not shaking in the least my faith in the ultimate success of future similar efforts.

I had failed, simply because I was found wanting as a business manager. But expert business managers are not lacking in our days, so if I, an amateur, could yet do as much and succeed thus far, why in the world could my plan not be carried through most successfully when the necessary able men were secured?

The most wholesome and direct result of my work was the impression it made on the labouring class. Of course the partisans of the different socialistic creeds believed their leaders and put the blame on

me. A good partisan must be proof against facts and arguments however irreputable.

But the labourer of average common sense and independent judgment now saw it demonstrated that in matters of business — on which we all have to rely for our subsistence — good intentions, honest principles and strenuous effort are not sufficient. Minds of organizing power are wanted, and they are not to be found among the labouring class, because the great demand for their abilities makes them quickly rise above it, and come to wealth and power.

The clear-minded labourer now saw the stupid absurdity of a “class hatred” which beforehand excluded those powerful men whose capacities were absolutely needed to make a new productive organization successful.

He saw the suicidal character of a “class war” as preached by social-democrats and anarchists. He also saw proven before his eyes how absurd the contention was of those idealists who supposed that by a general strike, by abolishing all authority and all law, mankind as it is now could come to order and efficiency by itself.

He understood that a careful training in democratic and coöperative methods was wanted, and that even a political overthrow, a majority of social-democrats in the Government and a socialistic legislature would be entirely unable to bring about at

once, as by miracle, what only a long, patient education could effect.

Of course this had been said many times before. But it had been said by more or less interested people by business men, politicians, economists, all under suspicion of conservative or egotistic tendencies. In my case there could be no such suspicions. I had given ample proof of my devotion to the cause of the poor and the struggling workers. There never was good reason to doubt my sincerity. So these convictions, freely expressed by me as the result of my personal experience — and published in a small weekly paper originally started by me, and called *De Pionier* — struck both labourers and business men with new light and force.

I agreed to the necessity of able management, severe discipline, businesslike methods, but at the same time I did not deviate one hair's breadth from the indicated course, the liberation of the oppressed poor, the abolishment of the social abuses, the end of the empire of rank plutocracy.

There appeared to me, however, no chance to make another effort in Holland. All that I could do there, and what I am actually doing there now, is to keep the concern of Walden going, under its heavy obligations, to reorganize it, now under my personal ownership and direction, in order to satisfy my creditors.

But for the next experiment I looked toward the

great country of experiments, where freedom is in the make, where there is no lack of energy, plenty of good-will and optimism, and a great number of able, well-intentioned men.

America, moreover, offers opportunities like no other country in the world, and though an organization of the kind I had in mind could be carried through anywhere, if the right men were found to do it, the chances of success would be greatly increased if we could find one of those favourable occasions where business is known to prosper even in average hands. We want lines of least resistance in all respects. In America there are still millions of acres of cheap fertile soil, there is still a constant influx of fresh, sober, unspoiled, unsophisticated workers — and I felt sure that there could also be found a few great business leaders, captains of industry, who would use their intellectual gifts not only for the benefit of themselves and their families, but also for humanity at large, when their own wants were sufficiently provided for.

So I came to America, and I felt that if I could make my troubles and sorrows useful and fruitful here there would be no loss of money nor of effort. It would make all good what I had suffered and I would not repent what I had done nor complain of what I had undergone.





**PART II**  
**IN THE NEW WORLD**



## CHAPTER I

### THE SCHEME FOR AMERICA

**I**N GIVING the details of my new plan for realizing Happy Humanity, after the failure made in Holland, I hope the reader will allow me to point out its significance.

The new organization will be called the Coöperative Company of America, or some such name. The title indicates that it is a business concern. No creed or political doctrine will be associated with it, except the creed that every normal human being holds — that of honesty and fairness.

We will start with a group of market-gardeners, and the land selected for that purpose lies in North Carolina, near the city of Wilmington. The opportunity there is exceptionally favourable. Colonization has been tried there, for several years, with much success. Italian, Dutch, and German settlers have there attained prosperity by truck-gardening. It is a great strawberry-raising country, and the soil is fit for the culture of the most varied plants and vegetables. The climate is like that of Italy, and the rainfall abundant. Excellent fast

trains, with refrigerator-cars, place the country within easy reach of the greatest markets of the whole continent.

The preliminary work for colonization, which would have given us great expense, is already done, and we can take advantage of the experience of others.

Here, if anywhere, are lines of least resistance, and we have secured an option on about twenty-thousand acres of land at a price of from \$15 to \$20 an acre. After a few years of cultivation the value should increase to \$200 or \$300 an acre, and more.

Our intention is to select a group of high-class gardeners, experts in intensive farming, and let them have this land as tenants. We shall be able to select twenty-five families, of the very best, and locate them next to one another on plots of about ten acres each.

These people should be immigrants, as yet unspoiled by contact with city life. Since Hollanders have a high reputation as intensive gardeners and generally excellent qualities for settlers, it was considered best to select this advance guard from my own country. And I know now, after some months of investigation in Holland, that I can get hundreds of families, willing and eager to come. In fact, a little group of half a dozen first-rate men have already answered my call and have settled there at

their own expense. They will do excellent work as prospectors and advisers.

They will pay no more than a fixed rent, which will never be increased to them. The settler will have the full reward of his efforts. When, after one or two years, he proves to be a desirable member of the new organization, he will become a *conditional owner* and stockholder of the company.

Therein lies the essential and vital point of the whole experiment. This is the one feature which distinguishes it from all similar enterprises and its effect has to be tried.

The usual form of colonization is simply to sell the land to the settler, the price to be paid from his earnings in a certain number of years. Then the man becomes a *landlord*, and is left entirely to his own devices, his own sense of justice and responsibility. What this means, with the raw material of immigrants annually let loose on American soil, is shown clearly and sadly enough by the immense waste and reckless spoliation of the vast resources of this rich country.

So what we are going to try now is *conditional ownership*, under control of a coöperatively organized company, in the following way:

The tenant will have full freedom in the cultivation of his farm. He may have all the rights of practical ownership, with the exception of *selling*, *renting*, and *neglecting* the property. He will be

able to leave the property to his heirs, if these accept the same conditions. If he wants to leave, the company will pay for his improvements. He need never pay more rent than a small sum, amounting to a percentage of the original amount paid by the company. This might be considered as a tax — a truly just and fair *single tax*, levied by the company for the benefit of the whole organization.

We believe that the compensation we can give for the want of the full title will prove to be more attractive to the intelligent farmer than uncontrolled rights of possession. This compensation will consist in the right to hold the dividend-paying stock. The tenant who may become a stockholder will then not be an *owner* of the land; but in common with the other members he will own the stock representing it. And he will profit by all the activities of the whole company, whether agricultural, industrial, or commercial. The company will, moreover, act as a disinterested agent and market his products for him, so that he may give all of his attention to his farm. The company will also buy for him at wholesale his supplies, seeds, fertilizer, implements, household goods, etc., and share with him the benefits of this community of interests. All these advantages are given in compensation for a limitation of his ownership, which is, in fact, nothing but a *control*.

It is worth trying, and more so than any social

improvement I know of. If, well conducted, it should fail, then we have a reason for giving up our belief in democracy.

This sort of coöperation has been tried in Europe and America, and generally very successfully. It is often said that coöperation abolishes the middleman. But this is untrue. It simply gives the middleman his fair due, and no more. When, as in France, shirts are made at a cost of twenty-five cents for material and labour, and sold wholesale for fifty-five cents, giving the labourer seven cents wage for two hours' work and the merchant twenty cents net profit — nobody can call this *fair*. It would be impossible to get such profits if all people concerned, producers and consumers alike, were consulted in the matter. In order to make such profits, the merchant has to *cheat* his labourers and his clients. This is what coöperation corrects.

The company will employ middlemen, of course, and pay them a fair remuneration, but it will tell both producer and consumer what its prices are — cost price, wholesale and retail price — and how much percentage it has to take as commission for its service.

By this commission the company will make its profits, besides the single tax on the tenants before mentioned. This implies that increasing production, and also increased prosperity with increasing requirements of its members, will increase its budget



and its profits. The more goods it sells, either to outsiders or to members, the wealthier it will become. And from these profits, which would be regulated within the margin of the outside market, will be formed, in the first place, a sinking fund for the amortization of the original debt; then one part as a dividend for preferred stock, another for dividends to common-stock holders, a third part for invalid and old-age pensions and insurance, and a part for the extension of the business. A banking department will be established as soon as possible.

The company will be constituted of two sorts of members — tenants who work entirely independently, and the employees who receive regular wages, according to the labour market. My experiments have plainly shown that it is entirely impractical and ruinous to bring an entire change into the ordinary remuneration of wage-earning employees. We shall have to follow the outside labour market — however unfair that may be — for the present, because we cannot otherwise attract men of ability to our enterprise.

On the other hand, it will never do to pay a farmer a fixed wage for his labour. It invariably lessens his efficiency. He must be dependent on his production and even liable to eviction if he is not able to make his farm pay. This, also, was the positive outcome of my own experiment.

Only the distinction of tenant members and in-

dustrial and administrative employees, as proposed, will meet all the difficulties.

The immense concerns of distributive coöperation in England and Belgium show what can be done even with average management. The annual net profits of the Coöperative Wholesale Societies in the United Kingdom amount to twenty million dollars. These societies, however, do not undertake agriculture and real-estate ownership, as we propose. They divide their profits among the members, making it a profit-business without wider scope. Their trouble is that they do not know how to invest, which sounds rather paradoxical. Their profits bother them, because their organization is incomplete.

Distributive wholesale coöperation is comparatively easy for ordinary business management. These huge wholesale societies are made up of ordinary labourers or middle-class people, and their managers are selected from among themselves, doing wonderfully well in their position, but not being organizers of great ability.

It is exactly this feature in which our plan will surpass them. It will be complete coöperation, including the production of the goods wanted by its members on the soil and in the factories owned by the company itself.

This greater conception can be executed only by organizers and leaders of great ability. I do not

see that there can be imagined a task more worthy of a great genius, a "captain of industry."

But the rare discernment needed to discover business abilities is certainly lacking in the multitude, and business organization by democratic method is at the present time utterly impossible. I have myself suffered from its pernicious effect.

For this reason it will be necessary to leave the authority in our company in the beginning entirely in the hands of those who initiated it. The board of trustees will appoint the manager, who is responsible only to them. The stockholding members will be chosen on recommendations of the manager, by the same board.

Gradually, however, education in democracy will begin. The settlers, who will have no part in the management in the beginning, will later acquire the right to vote and choose new members of the board of trustees, to whom they will always have access.

The safeguard for fair treatment and good management must be found in confidence in the initiators of the plan and the open discussion of its scope and aims.

Moreover, there is a safeguard in the public opinion and the public attention. Enterprises like this, with a motive of general interest, are always supported by public opinion. It was public opinion which caused the all-too-rapid boom of my coöperative enterprise in Amsterdam, but it was public

faith in my disinterestedness that made the final blow less hard than it would otherwise have been.

Since our board of trustees will be constituted by men of high standing and reputation, the public will back the company whenever possible — by buying its products or protecting it by legislation. If, however, the original aim is disregarded, the support of the public will surely be withdrawn.

I dare maintain that the chances for survival in the struggle for existence will always be greater in the organization proposed by me than in any other. Given the same outward circumstances and the same good management, this form of organization will always win, simply because it is more complete and more fair. For one thing, it keeps all the profits within the business, as soon as the debt to the investors is paid off. There are no leaks. Nothing is wasted to land-owners, to uncontrolled and irresponsible middlemen, nor to inactive outsiders. The stockholders who get the dividends will themselves work to increase them, and they will spend their dividends in buying goods from the company and so increase its prosperity.

The incentive for work will be greater than in any other concern, because the company will give not only the usual rewards, like any other business, but every member is sure that his production will not be wasted by outsiders, and all his efforts will strike home in the full sense.

The larger the concern grows, the less will be the waste in competition and advertising. An organization of producers and consumers need not advertise; its members can look, themselves, after the methods of production and the quality of articles produced.

The prosperity of the members will increase the prosperity of the company, because they will want more and buy more, and vice versa; because higher dividends will mean wealthier members. There will be no vicious circle, like in the present defective organization, where waste is engendering idleness and idleness waste; but a beneficial circle which will increase wealth and efficiency in a measure unknown thus far. It will grow — after the first difficult years have passed — like a rolling snowball. Its accumulation will accelerate at a rate that has never been seen before, and can never be seen elsewhere — simply because its organization is more perfect.

That all this is true theoretically, no one can deny. The objection will be that it has not yet been shown in practice, and that the plan in working will reveal unforeseen difficulties.

The only thing wanted is experiment, repeated tenaciously and methodically.

And I cannot conceive an object for experiment more important, more eagerly wanted by struggling humanity, than a better form of organized production and distribution.

It will not only correct idleness and waste; it will have immense moral and educational value. It will enable us to stop making paupers, criminals, and spendthrifts. It will enable us to prevent unemployment, for unemployment is the result of production at random, without thorough control and knowledge of the market. A well-organized company will take care to regulate production for its own market, so that no unemployment can set in, and it will shift its unskilled and half-skilled workers from one department to another, according to season or circumstance. Overproduction will not create enforced idleness and starvation, but increased leisure and prosperity to all.


To be strongly and effectively organized must be and remain its first concern. All philanthropic or sentimental considerations are to come after that. The best philanthropy is that which shows men how to help themselves. So the company will not start with inefficient workers, and will not extend more rapidly than proper organization allows. It will take care of its own invalids who become so in working for the company, but it will not begin to take care of the victims of present social disorder, for those invalids are made so by the existing system. It will never stop growing so long as it may expand safely, nor consider its final perfection reached so long as there is one necessary article of life not produced by its own members, or one poor worker

eager to join. This means, of course, that final perfection will be practically unattainable, and would signify nothing less than a state within a state. But there lies no serious objection in this. States within states we see everywhere; and provided they keep on good terms with each other and strive for the good, they cannot be considered dangerous or undesirable.

The comprehensiveness of the plan need scare nobody, surely not an American. Even if the goal were approached halfway, the benefit to mankind would be enormous; and no doubt a very useful emulation would ensue, giving rise to similar organizations of different degrees of perfection.

All this is theoretically possible, and whatever may be the difficulties to overcome or the failures we may have to "make good," no effort and no amount of money can be considered wasted given to a project so high and beneficial.

I, for one, would not deem my life ill-spent if I could contribute only a small share to the attainment of such a great aim.



## CHAPTER II

### CO-PRODUCTION

#### *Its Moral, Motives, and Results*

THE greatest difficulty encountered by me in my endeavours to carry through my plans was the habitual inertia of the human mind. There is no lack of good-will, no lack of strength, no lack of ability. But people do not see that the present system in which they are working is wrong. They do not see that it is in contradiction with their own inmost feelings of justice and fairness. They do not see that the defects of this system are the cause of most human misery, and that they — in continuing to work in it and to profit by it — actually bear, and load upon their wives and children who are dependent upon their work, the heavy burden of responsibility for those social sores and wrongs which they nearly all hate and want to mend.

The first thing that is needed is an insight into the fact that social evils are corrigible and that they are still existent only because we all tolerate and refuse to change a corrupt system of production.



The lack of such insight accounts for the curious inefficiency of so many philanthropic efforts and for the futility of so many eloquent words. For understanding cannot be acquired simply by communication. You may shout the truth in people's ears, yet they will not believe you. The great weight of custom and convention, biased by individual interests, and well furnished with all sorts of sophisms and subterfuges, is continually opposed to it. And only very slowly and by repeated efforts can you succeed in clearing up individual minds and in overcoming their inertia.

Few things in my life have caused me greater astonishment than the obstinate unwillingness or incapacity of honest, clear-minded men to see what seemed to me so perfectly obvious, and to do what would appear so very natural, simple and necessary.

Yet their condition of mind has been mine also. I know by my own experience how we can live on in that sort of fool's paradise, accepting a comfortable life as our due and as a matter of course, never once dreaming that our comfort means the discomfort of others, never giving a deeper thought to the actual methods by which our comforts are secured. We take the existence of pauperism and crime and degeneration as unavoidable evils like earthquakes or cyclones, and the division into rich and poor as a result of natural causes, beyond the influence of human power — a thing that we may

alleviate by philanthropy, but never by any chance, as a thing that can be abolished by wisdom and justice.

It may be interesting, therefore, to my readers to know how my eyes were opened, how it came to me that the division of mankind into rich and poor, with all its subsequent evils, is not a divine and inevitable institution, but the result of human wickedness and foolishness, of bad customs and bad organization, and that not only the poor, but especially the rich, are sorely in want of a better system.

I first came into conflict with existing customs because of my original personal sentiment about money. I wanted to have the good things of life, as any other healthy boy does, but I did not want them without *deserving* them, unless they were given to me out of love and good-will, as by my parents for instance.

But then I learned that the good things of the earth can be gotten only by money, and the natural conclusion is that money must be in some way or other an equivalent of service done. The world does not give out of love and good-will; so any money I got ought to represent some service of mine rendered to the world. This was my natural feeling, as it will be the feeling of any unspoiled, unsophisticated, morally healthy human being.

I found I had two ways of getting money — either as a doctor or as a poet. And both ways

were entirely unsatisfactory to me; they clashed against my natural feelings. Helping a sick, unhappy person out of trouble and then sending him a bill never failed to give me a sense of shame and humiliation. It was to me like saving a drowning child and then holding out my hand for a dollar. We must not call this sentimental or overscrupulous. It is quite a healthy, natural and normal feeling. Every fair-minded, honest doctor has had it. He overcomes it, saying, "One has to live," the meaning of which is that it is a bad system of retribution, but that we have to accept it for want of a better.

The deep fault of the system indicated by this feeling of humiliation and shame is that we measure out deeds of love, which are only indirectly productive, by dollars, which are supposed to be equivalents of productive labour. The doctor is a very useful member of society, and society ought to remunerate him largely, but it is absurd and shocking to his feelings to exact this remuneration from the poor, suffering individual himself. In a well-ordered society the sick man should be helped by the whole community. Certainly the invalid himself, losing his productivity, ought not to be the one to pay, in equivalents of productive labour, for help in his misfortune. This is the logical, natural way, and the repulsion felt by every medical man in the beginning of his career against asking his patients for money is the logical, natural, human feeling.

The same can be said, in a still deeper way, about the activity of the poet and the artist. The poet and the artist are eminently *useful* members of society. They furnish society with goods of incomparable value. So they should be rewarded amply, and their desires should be abundantly satisfied. But to measure out their contributions to the world by dollars, the equivalents of material production, never fails to arouse in the finely sentient, artistic soul a feeling of humiliation, shame and disgust. Of course they have to overcome it — and they do, alas! — but there has been no true artist, just as there has been no good doctor, to whom the feeling has always been entirely unknown.

Multatuli tells us that he was once accosted by a prostitute in the street, and that at his movement of contempt and disgust he heard a voice in his heart saying: “Thou art worse than she is, for she sells her body, but thou sellest thy soul!”

And we all know what it means to Art itself, if the devotion to it becomes mixed, as it *has* to become in our present system, with the greed for money. How few are the artists, even among the greatest, who keep their art and their souls free from the pernicious influence of mercantilism! When society is in a state of confusion the best thing we can do is to cling tenaciously and patiently to what we feel to be our inmost sense of right and wrong.

Of course I had to give in to some extent, practically, in order to live. I got money for my books, and I got money for my consultations. But I never did it without inward protest and without trying to escape from what seemed to me a constant insult to my finer feelings. The only way to avoid it was to be rich, and to write and help out of sheer love, without taking money.

I was not rich, but I had relatives who were well-to-do, and they contributed an annual sum to my household. In this way it seemed as if I were approaching the ideal way of serving mankind. There, however, another difficulty came in: We all know the feeling of delicacy when it comes to accepting somebody else's gifts. We have no objection to being rich, but we object to taking money from another man so long as we can help ourselves. What does this feeling of delicacy mean? It means that we consider the money we get the equivalent of somebody else's work, and we don't want to live on that so long as we are able ourselves. Every man who is not corrupt and depraved has that feeling of honour. Being *pensioned* by another individual, however good a friend or near a relative, hurts our pride, jars against our feelings of honour. Our ethical instinct, so to speak, makes a just and nice distinction. No doctor and no artist would make an objection to being remunerated by any board or committee representing *Society* as a whole.

He would feel justified in taking his livelihood from society, because he knows he serves society. But living by the favour of any *individual man* humiliates him. It is like taking alms, like living by charity. Why? Because he cannot feel that any individual man, who is not commissioned by the community, has the right to dispose of the common property.

This was my feeling, and I believe Americans will understand it as a true democratic feeling.

After this my thoughts went deeper. I began to reflect on the power given to my relatives, who were able and willing to help me, and whose help I could not feel otherwise than humiliating. Society seemed to be paying *them*, though they were not more useful servants than I was. They could pay me out of their own abundance. Would it make much difference if I were rich myself? Some day the wealth of these people would come to me, by legal means. Would *then* my scruples all be discarded? *Who* would be paying my annual income, if their money became mine? Was it society, or any just representative of society?

By no means. I would be rich and remain rich, not using up my wealth at all, but getting more wealth, more comfort, for the only reason that I had wealth already. The only difference would be that the money would not come from any individual I know, but in an obscure way, through the medium of bankers or of brokers from absolutely

unknown sources. Would this be less humiliating, less shameful, even supposing that these unknown sources were clean?

Surely not. And if we do not feel it so, it is only because our sense of honour and shame has been generally stunned by the immense universality of the custom, by the obscure and complicated way in which the money — the equivalent of somebody else's productive labour — comes to us.

I went on investigating. And soon it became clear to me that the sources were not clean at all. The money, got by wealth alone, was surely not the sort of remuneration that my conscience as a doctor or an artist, as a servant of the community, would willingly accept. It was not at all a just tribute paid for my services by an appreciative community. It was got by practices which I could not define otherwise than as low and deceitful, from people who were for the most part poorer than I, and who were surely not appreciative of my value as a public servant, as an artist, or as a man of science. And worst of all, this way of being paid could be practised by any dunce, any rascal, by the most dangerous enemies of the community.

Could any form of remuneration be more humiliating, more shameful, more unworthy? I could not see it then and I cannot see it now. However unusual and eccentric it may sound to the average unreflective mind, I do not think that it is more

honourable to live on the interest of a large capital than to live by alms, by running a gambling house, a saloon, or a brothel. The mischief in the latter cases is more obvious, that's all.

This will be called a very hard verdict, but I beg the gentle reader to observe that it is less hard to him who probably does not believe it than to the present writer, who is convinced of its truth and yet cannot escape it any better than the reader.

The usual method by which the generous and fair-minded physician tries to escape the dilemma is by taxing the wealthy very highly and by treating the poor gratuitously by forcing, so to speak, the well-to-do to help the less fortunate. This amounts to the method of Karl Moor in Schiller's "Brigands," who robbed the rich in order to give freely to the poor. It may be pardonable in times of general disorder and confusion; it is none the less unlawful and barbarous.

Such difficulty, such scruples were the deepest and most powerful motives for the change of life of which I have told in a previous chapter. I agree that I was guilty of pride, but a pride I deem legitimate — the difference between me and other people being only this, that I, with inborn obstinacy, did not allow my pride to bend before the almost universal pressure of custom and convention.

I tried then, as the reader knows, to contribute my personal share to the production of material wealth.



I reduced my expenses to a minimum, and took part in all sorts of productive labour. I plowed and dug, planted cabbage and potatoes, tried to be useful as a market gardener, a beekeeper, a baker, a merchant, and a storekeeper. My former clients and the readers of my writings shook their heads and deplored what they not unjustly considered as a sad waste of my time and talents. It was a waste, surely. But I got something in return: I got insight and experience. I learned the complication of modern production, the need of high efficiency, the immense importance of good management, the value of the organizing mind.

I had to give in, at the end, forced by misfortune. I had failed in my attempt to form a self-supporting community, prosperous enough to give to the artist or the man of science living in its midst a life free from material care. But my conviction that such a community of honest and fair-minded workers was possible, and that it was the only real solution of the problem — this conviction was strengthened to the utmost certitude.

And so I once more accepted the humiliation of selling my writings, and making a merchandise of my art; but I resolved at the same time to devote all the energy and strength I could spare to the furtherance of that community which is sure to come and which will enable us *all* to live in material comfort without shame, without taking alms from the

powerful, and without taking part in obscure devices of problematic honesty.

I know what remarks will be made and I will meet them in advance. Some will say: "This is socialism!" But I have nothing to do with that remark. Call it what you like, is it therefore less true, less real, less obvious? I am no doctrinarian, I hold no special creed or dogma. I know that this pride of mine, which forbids me as an able, healthy man to live by the grace of others, to live on alms, on gambling, investing, or on the fruit of other more or less dishonourable practices — this pride is the normal feeling of every morally healthy man. And women, though they are accustomed through the course of centuries to live in dependence on the work of husbands and fathers, have the same pride, as is shown clearly in our days wherever women become economically independent.

Another remark will be, that I want the *state* to pay doctors and artists. But this is a mistake. Certainly the position of professors and artists salaried by the Government is an easy and gratifying one. But except in the matter of education it cannot be a general solution of the problem, principally because the present governments are not representative of true commonwealths. In a true commonwealth it would not be *possible* for an able man either to live luxuriously without labour, or to live on alms for want of work or of payment. No

artist, no man of science who had given proof of his ability, would be left to the necessity of bartering and bargaining with his art or his science in order to get a living.

Let us consider now whether this plan of mine, this coöperative, or, rather, co-productive, company which is being started in North Carolina, is really a better form of organization and whether it may not, if well managed and if favoured by happy circumstances, even be a germ of a better social system. May it not either become a tiny model of other similar and greater structures, or develop itself into a full-grown and powerful body, a state within a state, or, rather, a true commonwealth within a state?

Suppose we succeed in attracting to the initial group, to the nucleus of the company, a fine set of first-rate producers — experts in intensive agriculture — and in making these people see the advantage of having all the members of the community buy together and sell together, and become joint owners of all the stock, including the real estate, instead of serving as tenant to a private landlord. According to our experience so far, this seems not at all too optimistic a supposition.

Then after the first few difficult years, the preferred stock will be paid back to the original investors, or used for further extension. The dividends will enrich all the producers, increase their wants, and at the same time increase their output and their

profits. Small industries, dairy factories, canning factories, will be established to work the products and sell them more profitably. Every producer will then be interested in the prosperity of his neighbours, and instead of keeping his methods a private secret, he will communicate them freely to the others. Enterprises of common interest, a bank, bakeries, and shops will be established. Every newcomer will also be a consumer, and will enlarge the market.

No money will be wasted in rent, in interest, in undue profits to middlemen. No slackening of effort or efficiency will be tolerated by the others. Every department will have to be under the direction of a manager, responsible to the general board, which in turn will be under the control of the members. The waste in advertisement will be gradually reduced, the producers being also consumers, and the quality of the products under their control. Unemployment will be done away with, as the production will be directed to articles of general use which have a fixed market, and the unskilled labour will be kept busy, shifting from one thing to another according to the season-work. The invalids within the community will be provided for and no able man will be allowed to starve in enforced idleness.

Then, when the system beings to work to its full extent, we shall see the *leaks stopped*, and such an annual increase of profits as has never been possible in any other concern. There will be an annual sur-

plus growing so fast as to become actually alarming. Why? For this simple reason that, in a group of men producing in common from a common source of wealth, their *productive power increases at a faster rate than their number*. This is a fact that no economist denies.\*

But the tremendous significance of the fact is realized by few. It will be understood only when the theory has been put into practice.

*Man, under proper conditions, produces more than he consumes, and this surplus increases with the increase in the number of those with whom he coöperates.*

Whenever, with intelligence and sagacity, with firmness of moral principle, this great truth is put into practice, men will attain to a condition in which it shall be more blessed for every one to give than to receive, because every one will have enough. We shall then be as guiltless of greedy grasping in social life as we now are when we sit at the table of a prosperous, well-bred family. The steadily increasing affluence and the moral pressure of the members will compel the authorities of such a company to perform acts that would seem to us to-day magnanimous to an unheard of and inconceivable degree. Even now instances may be seen in which great prosperity and an elevation of the general ethical tone have led to the performance of such acts. How much more imposing they will be when the property is

\*Exhaustion of the sources of wealth is left out of account, as we are practically too far from it as yet.

really collective — *common wealth*, in the full sense — and when the general morality is purified of the fearful corruption and unreality with which it is now infected.

We have been frightened, especially by the dogmatic socialistic party, with the remark that such a small group can never compete with the big monopolies. We shall be fought down, they say, crushed in an instant by the tremendous power of the big, parasitical bodies.

But the concentration of capital in a parasitically organized group is merely apparent. The accumulated wealth comes into the hands of individuals and is in a short time dispersed again. The essential and permanent characteristic of the great industrial and commerical bodies is not the wealth that can be measured in gold, in real estate, in goods, but the knowledge accumulated in the heads of managers and workmen, the *experience* and the *organization*. It is Andrew Carnegie himself who has emphasized this fact. If a higher moral principle can be added to this, the whole structure is invincible; if not, it may fall to pieces in a twinkling, with all its power and wealth.

In no single respect, then, does the honest producer stand actually powerless in face of the parasitic groups. Their gold and silver and banknotes he does not need, their tools and factories he can make, he wants nothing but a certain amount of fertile

soil, courage, coöperation, and an organizing leadership. But his energy must be directed toward *production*, production of his own necessities, so that he may become independent and self-supporting in the shortest time.

What could happen to a group of co-producers, living on their own lands, having their own mines, producing their own food and clothes, building their 'own houses — what could crush them? Who could attack them? They would be invincible, inviolable, in the midst of a hundred hostile trusts.

Well-organized production of the first necessities of life, from common sources — this is to be the basis of our company; it is the only basis of a true commonwealth. This and this alone will give it unconquerable strength, however small its origin. This is the only untarnishable source of real power. He who controls the production of the necessities of life controls the world. The lack of this principle is the weakness of all other schemes for social reform. Social legislation, single tax, agricultural education, credit banks, distributive coöperation, consumers' leagues, back-to-the-land movements — they may all help, but they are all palliative, beginning somewhere in the middle or at the top. The real basis of the social structure is production of life's necessities. We are all dependent on these, artist and scientist and banker alike, and until their

production is well organized, all social reform will only alleviate and never cure the social diseases.

The accumulation of capital in an anti-parasitic, co-productive federation must, other conditions being equal, proceed far more rapidly than such accumulation in a parasitic system. Where all elements work together and nothing is wasted, where no idlers and drones are tolerated to weaken the course of industry, where producer is at the same time consumer in one and the same federative body, the surplus of production must increase at an incomparably more rapid rate.

Though the parasitic groups have now, apparently, a tremendous handicap, once the pure anti-parasitic federation arises, they will be overtaken in an astonishingly short time. They will be out-run, just as in a plantation the trees of slower growth, however big, give place to those that grow more quickly. As soon as there grows up in America, where the conditions are most favourable, an organization of workers who will produce for each other; shut out inefficiency, idleness, and parasitism; retain the surplus, interest and profits, as well as the land and mines and factories, as collective property — this organization, if well managed, will attain in a few decades to a power and wealth that will far exceed anything that we have hitherto seen, even in America. It will eclipse Standard Oil, which thrives on one not even indispensable article and



which can at any moment be killed by a new invention; it will eclipse financial coalitions which live by clever plotting, and waste far more than they even indirectly produce. The benevolent acts of millionaires that are now reputed princely will be child's play in comparison with the gigantic and fabulous acts of general utility and ethical enlightenment that such a federation will put into execution. Enterprises from which powerful states now shrink will be taken up by it as a matter of course. There will not be a scientific enterprise for which it shall not furnish all the means, not a need in the world that it shall not alleviate of its own free motion. Libraries, schools, academies it will establish and maintain, even far beyond the borders of its territory. Having no selfish aims in view and having to dispose every year of a constantly growing surplus, it will cause valuable works to be executed by foreign peoples. No political king and no money king shall be able to emulate its immense economical power. No war shall be carried on without its assistance or consent. No strike will be possible anywhere in the world without its powerful support. Simply by its unlimited wealth it will hold the balance of peace and war as well in the political as in the economical domain. The honour and privilege of belonging to such a commonwealth will be greater than that of any citizenship in the world.

All this is irrefutable in theory. To prove its

practical possibility by tenaciously repeated experiments I consider the foremost duty of those who have the necessary talents and opportunity.

The first result of common prosperity in the small initial group will be that country life will be made attractive. The co-producers will begin to make their farms and homes pleasant to look at and comfortable. They will improve the means of communication, and so take away the sense of loneliness, of backwardness that now drives so many young people from the farms to the cities. The *garden city* will grow up, not as an artificial scheme planned by the philanthropic effort of rich people, but as a natural outcome of common wealth and common wants.

The only way of bringing the producer "back to the land" is to make the land attractive and a centre of civilization. All other methods are artificial and will fail. The surplus of the farmer's labour now flows to the cities and draws the young farmer after it. Keep that surplus on the land and the farmer will stay there too.

Another remark that I often hear is that "mankind is not yet ripe" for this sort of co-production. Men are not yet good enough; they want moral education first. In answer to this I may remark that moral education is impossible so long as children grow up in a wrong system of production. It

is not only by books and teachers that children are educated, but by facts and deeds which they daily see around them. All children in our present town-life, in surroundings of modern society, are educated on false principles. They learn to respect the idle rich, and to see in them models to emulate. They are brought up with the idea of getting rich as soon as possible, no matter how, and to be able to let other people do the work. They learn to accept charity from powerful individuals, and to admire their benevolent acts as glorious deeds. They are educated to give up the best pride of the honourable man, the pride that makes him refuse any profit that he did not earn fairly by his service to society. What are class-books and Bibles in the face of this enormously suggestive education in evil?

According to my experience men are sufficiently ripe — rather overripe. They want education by practice, by a better method of production. Their defects are the defects of the uneducated, of children — that is, greed and short-sightedness.

They *all* would be better off, rich and poor alike, if they produced fairly together, and did not try wildly to run down their rivals.

Short-sightedness is the only great danger we have to guard against in our co-productive enterprise. The one criticism of our plan which I consider not unfounded is that some day the members of the

group, out of short-sighted greed, will stop extension, buy up the preferred stock and become a closed company. This is a possibility against which we have to take careful measures. First of all, the moral trend of the company must be well laid down in the rules and openly discussed. The public, who can do much in the beginning for the support of the plan, simply by becoming customers and consumers of our products, must know what we are aiming at, and be able to withhold their support when the rules are violated or changed in essential points.

And then, no experiment is without dangers, no success was ever attained without a certain amount of optimistic belief. I, for one, believe in the possibility of adding a few more drops of morality to business, and of not spoiling but improving it thereby.

From the high and wide viewpoint of biological science the great change that I have indicated as taking place in the human race is obvious and unmistakable. The numerous small quarrelling, fighting, and robbing groups are gradually melting into one big tightly interwoven mass, united by commerce and swift communication. At the same time, the standards of reciprocal violence, extortion, and deceit are slowly but surely changing into those of mutual understanding, fair dealing, and honest exchange.

Science and knowledge are now binding all human-kind together by invincible power, the advantages of mutual aid and equity are becoming daily more manifest. The tremendous transition from political state to commonwealth goes on, steadily and irresistibly, like a great stream obeying gravitation. For this transition obeys the strongest impulse of the race — self-preservation.

This does not mean that the change is entirely unconscious and instinctive. It is true that millions of units, the majority of mankind, act their part in the great performance without knowing what is going on, or to what end they live. But man is an animal that is bound to think and reflect, and he will act on conscious reflection. He may be under all sorts of delusions, but he will never give up trying to get away from them. And so the great change that I mean will come about by conscious voluntary effort, by the intelligent direction of the great in-born impulses of the mass.

This is what we have to try. And we have to repeat our endeavours and our experiments incessantly, tenaciously, undaunted by manifold failures. For the scientific mind finds as much instruction in failure as in success. And what amount of failure, of trouble and expense can be too high a price for this greatest of all human achievements, a great commonwealth, covering the whole planet, held together by laws of morality and justice and good-will,

based on science, on wisdom, and on the right perception of the unchangeable, the true, the everlasting, the Divine?

The full triumph may seem unattainable, but I think we can wish for no better aim in life than to have fought for it.

## CHAPTER III

### WHAT I SAID TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**A**DDRESSING an audience in Carnegie Hall, New York, on the 4th of March, 1908, I spoke as follows:

I hope you have not come here to amuse yourselves or to admire a fine display of brilliant eloquence.

For I am not likely to satisfy you therein. It may even be that I shock you by saying unpleasant things in a foreign sort of English.

But I have come because I have something very serious to tell you which lies as a burden on my soul, and Emerson has said that when a man feels the burden of truth in his soul that truth will become eloquent by itself, though the man may stutter and stammer.

I confess that I, for one, believe that when a man is on a great errand there is a "guidance" for him showing him the things he has to take note of. I shall tell you how I felt that "guidance" on this visit to America.

I came here on board the greatest and fastest ship known, travelling first class. We were a very "swell" party indeed and had a good time, with eating and drinking and musical entertainment unless a big Atlantic swell put us off our feet.

And I had a little chat with one of the ship's officers and he told me that we should go still faster if the men down below were not such a bad lot. The men down below were 300 firemen, working deep under in the bellows of the gigantic steamer.

Imagining what it meant to stand day and night before huge fires under the cold draught, I asked, "Well, I hope, when we have arrived, these people will have something of a good time also."

"To be sure they will," said the man; "they will be drunk in no time." And while we were eating and drinking and hearing music in our splendid first-class dining-room I thought of those 300 men below.

Now the *Mauretania* is an English ship and belongs to the Old World, and I was going to a New World. And among the swells on board was pointed out to me the biggest swell of all, a very tremendous swell indeed. This was a New World swell, and they called him a *Steel King*. Now it had struck me that people in the Old World used to have only one King at a time, but America seems to entertain a whole crowd of them: Steel Kings, Oil Kings, Sugar Kings, Railway Kings, ever so many. We know that America wants everything on a large scale. Well, this King looked very humorous and amiable; he made a little speech about money and munificence; they all sang out that he was a jolly good fellow. I hope he is.

Then just before we entered the Bay of New York I took up a book in the beautiful library, a book on New World philosophy, by Prof. William James, and there I came across a foreign item quoted from a newspaper:

"A young workman from New York, having sought for employment in vain, week after week, and unable to bear the sight of his starving wife and children, *killed himself by drinking carbolic acid.*"

At that very moment, that very moment, the great ship swung around into New York Harbour and we saw the metropolis of the New World, and to the left the majestic Statue of Liberty illumining the world. This was my "guidance," people of America. The beautiful, imposing statue seemed to me a horrible, cruel mockery. Do you know what its lofty gesture seemed to signify?

"Do you look for liberty and justice? Well, then, seek for it in Heaven; don't expect to find it here." That is what the uplifted hand said to me.



*Killed himself by carbolic acid because he wanted to work and could not and was unable to bear the sight of his starving family,* and I am told this is one case out of many. Now I want to ask you one question, people of America. How is it that, when some poor slave on the coast of Africa is flogged to death, you all cry out for shame, and when one man is condemned unjustly for high treason the whole civilized world is in uproar — but when an honest workman in the richest country of the world, in a democratic commonwealth, feels himself compelled to drink carbolic acid simply because he wants to do his duty — you all shrug your shoulders and say, “What shall we do?”

He was but one sufferer out of many, but imagine his agony, his mental and moral tortures, that he preferred this horrible death. I declare to you the vision of that one man pouring the burning liquid down his throat to escape the sight of his starving children is haunting me day and night. And I say it ought to haunt you, members of the same community — which you call a commonwealth — you and all your magistrates, your statesmen, and your kings. It ought to haunt you more than does the vision of the poor negro slaves in Africa. These are not members, workers, of your boasted commonwealth.

*Common wealth* indeed! I tell you, so long as you are not able to prevent horrible iniquities like these going on in the midst of you, you had better speak of *common misery*. And so long as there is one honest, capable worker in your midst, driven to despair because he cannot find even the liberty to do the first duty of every citizen — that is, to work — then you had better be silent about Liberty. You had better make a large wooden case of blackboards and put that over your Goddess of Liberty and paint on it in big white letters: LIB-ERTY IN REPAIR.

Now once more I ask you, how is it that a book of fiction written some fifty years ago by Mrs. Beecher Stowe about the misery of a negro slave set your whole nation aflame and made you fight a long and bloody war to abolish slavery, while this far more terrible and unjust slavery, bringing with it unheard of

sufferings, going on in your very midst, is met, if not with indifference, with a hopeless, helpless passivity? Where is the Mrs. Beecher Stowe of to-day and her novel about *The Man Who Drank the Carbolic Acid*? Are your hearts hardened to such horrors? No. For sure you are as kind-hearted, as sensitive to misery, to iniquity, to injustice as your fathers were half a century ago. Only — you do not know! You do not know what to do, how to help, where to begin. It is knowledge you lack, not sentiment.

I am not a sentimentalist; I know how to suffer and to submit to unavoidable suffering in the world. But I tell you *this* suffering is not unavoidable. There is a remedy; there *must* be a remedy; it would be an eternal shame to mankind if, having achieved so many wonders of science and intelligence, it could not find a way out of these horrors. There is enough feeling of justice, enough good-will, enough power — enough and to spare. It is *intelligence* that we lack; understanding in the first place, and then patient endeavour and unwavering faith.

Now the fact is that you pretend to have established a great commonwealth, but you have thus far done nothing of the sort. You have political states, you have a certain order, you have a government, you have private business concerns, but you have no commonwealth. *Private* wealth you have, and too much of it, but no common wealth. You know how to gain money, but you do not know how to distribute it, nor how to spend it. You are wasting it for the most part.

Now don't call me names and say I am a communist, a socialist, an anarchist, a collectivist, or what you like. I am nothing but a man who wants to live a just and righteous life in the midst of a just and righteous community, but I am aware that this is impossible — and you are all of one mind with me, I have no doubt. Don't bother over words; don't be afraid of communism, of socialism, or any other ism; look for what is right and try to do it. If communism means the possession of goods in common, do we not see communism, real practical communism, springing up everywhere? I ask you, is a public

library not communism? is a museum not communism? is Yellowstone Park not communism?

We all know that Yellowstone Park is a beautiful reality and that it is good and possible to have things in common, but what we do not know is the answer to the following questions: what things *do* we have in common, *can* we have in common, and *ought* we to have in common?

I consider these among the greatest, the most urgent, the most important questions of our present life. And mind! They cannot be solved by clever reasoning nor by any amount of reading and theories. They can be solved only by practice, by facts, by careful investigation and patient experiment, not by words alone, but by deeds, deeds!

Only to contribute my small part to the solution of these great questions I have sacrificed many years of my life, a good deal of my strength, my whole fortune, and, most precious of all, time and effort that I could have given to my art. And though everybody may disagree with me, I do not consider the issue of the enterprise a failure, because, most decidedly, the desired solution has been brought nearer by it.

In the first place, my experience taught me in a decisive way that our original form of communism as practised by the ancient Christians, according to the Gospel, is not only utterly impossible, but also undesirable. We all have met people who maintain that even in the present condition of society we ought to follow the example of Christ and His Apostles to the letter and do away with private property. This sort of people also flocked to me at the beginning of my experiments, and it is a fact of which you may easily assure yourselves that it is no use at all to tell these people that history teaches us over and over again that idealism is untenable. You may point out to them the instance of Saint Francis, whose heroic efforts all came to nothing, in a short time, even during his lifetime. You may show that his followers soon gave up their scorn of money and that all those sects or little groups that tried to do what he did and to live a life of poverty and absolute communism failed — it is no use. The only way to convert these fanatics is the way

that I choose — that is, to give them a fair trial in hard earnest in practical life.

In my experiment it soon came to light that the most fanatical communists were the first to complain of this painful and artificial situation. They wanted back their private home life, their own family circle, their private possession of house and furniture, even of money; they realized very soon that this so-called liberty was worse than slavery. Of course, they threw the blame on others, considering themselves, each of them, as the only person fit for this sort of life; but there is no need to explain that their arguments were not very convincing.

We want to know, first of all, what goods ought to become public property in a well-ordered community. We want to know how we are to deal in a just and rightful way with capital and rent.

Not to do away with them, as these fanatics would have us to do, for civilized mankind could not exist without them — but to handle them ably, fairly, and justly.

We want to know how to deal with wealth so as to give it an equitable distribution, not to do away with wealth, for poverty is not at all a venerable and holy thing, as any man with sound reason and open eyes may know. It is rather a dreadful curse, in violent opposition to the higher gifts of the race, to art, science, wisdom, and culture. Poverty is degrading, brutalizing, nursing all sorts of lower animal instincts, suppressing the more spiritual and divine human faculties. It is always akin to squalor. Whereas wealth is and has always been the source of art, of science and culture, of beauty and wisdom. No great civilization has come into bloom without wealth. Wealth was the immediate cause of the glory of those famous centres of human development, of Egypt, of Athens, of Rome, of Florence, of the Netherlands, of England.

But, mind you, the good effect is caused only by *common* wealth. Common wealth is a blessing and a necessity for higher spiritual development. No high spiritual mark can be reached without leisure and no leisure without common wealth.

But private wealth, without restriction or limitation, as we know it in our present disordered society, is a curse, and a

cause of deprivation and ruin, of idiotic and suicidal waste. The slightest knowledge of the fate of the great civilizations will teach you this. Wherever the private individual has been allowed to accumulate unbounded riches for his own use only, for extending his own private power, the result has been a fatal luxury, resulting in deprivation and demoralization, to the complete ruin of the community.

And I lay this question before you Americans: Do you really think that this rule, so clearly taught by human history, no longer holds good? Do you really think, citizens of this great Republic, that you will escape the fate of the great Roman Empire if you continue to neglect the most obvious lesson of history? Well, I am a citizen of a small kingdom which has no longer any predominant voice in the assembly of nations, but Holland, now an insignificant kingdom, was once a powerful republic, and it had its dreams of imperialism just as much as you have now. And by neglecting this great principle, that common wealth is a blessing, but unbounded private wealth is a curse, my poor country has fallen to depths of humiliation and shame which might be something of a warning to you.

Do you really believe that your present social institutions are more truly democratic and a better guarantee against common dissolution and ruin than were those of the Athens of Pericles and the Rome of the elder Cato? Do you even pretend to have realized the idea of a democratic republic as it lived a little more than a century ago in the minds of the great founders of the American nation? Do you think that if Franklin or Washington could return at this day they would exclaim, "That is it! there we are! that is the sort of thing we have dreamt of and struggled for!"

Are you really not aware that you, the Republic *par excellence*, where no titles, no aristocracy, no decorations, are said to be allowed—that you are not a bit farther from becoming a monarchy, with all its attributes, than the Roman Republic was at the beginning of the Christian era, or than the first French Republic was at the beginning of the last century? Do you not realize that in your present condition you deserve

to become a monarchy, and that your fate is therefore imminent, because every nation gets the government that it deserves and nothing better? If you do not see this or believe it, I daresay the sad experience of my own poor nation gives me a right to smile at your optimism. We also fought one big tyrant and we got a lot of little ones instead.

Not only from human history, but also from natural history, can we learn some useful lessons about wealth, common wealth and private wealth, and the only safe and lasting relation between the two.

Among the many trades that I took in hand for a practical study of sociology was that of beekeeping, and by observation of the bee community we may find some fundamental principles which are valuable in human society as well as in that of bees. Bees are capitalists; they accumulate immense stores; the bees born in spring die in autumn, and during their short summer life they not only work for themselves, but they perform an incredible amount of extra labour, and the fruits of this labour, the surplus value, as socialists would call it, they leave to the community, for the benefit of the bees born in autumn, in order that they may live out the winter and reach the next spring.

This fact is remarkable enough and a grand lesson for mankind, but still more remarkable and a constant source of wonder and admiration for the observer is this fact: that every single bee is constantly in immediate contact with vast quantities of honey and yet never uses more for his private want than is strictly necessary. Yea, its self-control and self-denial go so far that, when want and famine come in, the last drop of honey is rigorously preserved for the queen bee, the mother of the race, and every private individual gives itself up to voluntary starvation. This wonderful economy is well worth pondering over. Is there not something in it that ought to make mankind blush for shame?

Here, then, we see capitalism in combination with communism, and more than that, we see that this combination is the only way to make both capitalism and communism practicable and useful for individual and community.

And last, not least, we find the answer to the questions how and when a just and righteous commonwealth can be established. The answer is, only when the individuals of the human community have acquired the self-control of the bees and know how to live in private soberness, in the immediate presence of vast common wealth. Do you doubt the possibility of such self-denial? Well, then, I declare myself in this respect the optimist, and there smile at your pessimism. More faith than in the so-called democratic institution of the America of to-day have I in the ultimate sound reason of the human race, and above all in its instinct of self-preservation.

For nothing else than sound reason and the instinct of self-preservation will teach mankind, all of it, that individual self-control, limited private wealth, are the only means to keep community and individual from demoralization and destruction. It is so very clear that the present social institutions of mankind are suicidal, being pernicious for the individual and the race, that if we did not know the power of convention, the pertinacity of certain errors, and the inertia of the mind of the masses, we could hardly understand how man can so thoughtlessly work for his own undoing. The great danger I see in your American life is that the most capable individuals are allowed to accumulate for their own private use such a quantity of wealth that, long before they lose their working power, they have lost every stimulus to work on, and can, if they like, live in the greatest luxury, they and their children, simply by doing nothing.

I pray you to mark this well: I don't see any danger in the fact that the most capable and ablest men are remunerated very highly, so as to give them full satisfaction. But the imminent peril for us all, for society and individual, for us and our children, lies here — that every man has before him the possibility of giving up his labour altogether and of living on his money — that is to say, on usury and parasitism — without giving any equivalent in useful work.

Must it not be clear, even to the mind of a mere child, that in this way society is gradually losing its best forces, that in our

present social order the highest premium is given not for good work but for sheer idleness, and that, inevitably, this idleness will grow and grow, and this general ideal will become more and more to grow very rich and do nothing at all but enjoy and invent fresh forms of excitement and pleasure?

It is true that the accumulating instinct, the activity of money-getting, works on in many individuals, though they may have become millionaires. But it will soon die out in their children who are born rich. And anybody who is well acquainted with the psychology of the Dutch nation will know that we were just as active, two centuries ago, just as smart, acute, go-ahead, as the Americans of to-day — and yet these faculties have been lost in a few generations by the influence of private wealth, and it is only by the example of the nations around us that we have been stimulated or compelled more or less to regain something of our former energy. Only think of this: A society, obliged to rely on the working capacities of its members and having for its general ideal the ambition to be very rich and do nothing at all, except squandering the products of common activity! If this may not be called suicidal, what may?

People talk of egotism, and tell me that human egotism is too strong to make a better social order possible. But I should like to ask if you call it egotism to set your own house on fire and poison your children. Are we not acting just as foolishly by allowing every individual to be spoiled and demoralized by extravagances and idleness, paying them simply because they are rich and do nothing? This is not egotism; it is folly and self-destruction.

If we only nourished, by common labour and consent, a set of worthless parasites, who spent the common goods in idleness and luxury, the harm would not be so great. It would be only ridiculous, for an industrious community could easily afford the extravagance just as it can afford to keep zoölogical gardens. But we are constantly pushing our best men, our most capable workers, into this whirlpool of luxury and extravagance, ruining them and their families, by allowing them to live on the



fruits of accumulated wealth, without any labour. And this is draining society of its best powers, bleeding it slowly to death. Slowly, I say — but in the history of human civilization the rate is relatively quick. Two centuries sufficed to bring the once glorious Dutch Republic to the verge of extinction.

You will ask me, of course, if I have found a remedy; if I see a way out of this difficulty. My answer is: Have you, who ask me, ever sought it, in hard earnest? Surely not, for if you had, you would not put that question to me. You might just as well ask me if I see a way out of New York. It is very hard to see it — if you don't look for it.

For many years I have sought for a way out of the social disorder, or rather the imperfect order, in which we live at present. I have looked and sought for it in hard earnest. And I have found that it is extremely easy to see and point out — just as easy as to see and to point out the waterway between Atlantic and Pacific. But to *make* that way and to *use* it, is another question. *For nobody can do that alone!* Of this I am convinced, that if there were as many men who went to work with a will and set all their heart and energy to it as are now working at that great waterway — the way out of our social confusion would be traced and completed sooner than the canal of Panama. But we should not only need the hands for digging and shovelling, but also the engineers and the great leading minds to organize the work.

Let us consider what the task would mean. It would mean the formation of a community which would keep in common possession those goods that, for the welfare and preservation of all, ought to remain common property, and which moreover would not allow any of its capable members to squander the common goods without giving useful work — a community which would restrict the possibilities of extravagance, usury, parasitism and idleness — and which on the other hand would suffer no pauperism, and would never let any capable and willing member starve for want of work. Do you believe the formation of such a community a miracle? — a greater miracle than the Panama Canal? Well, then, I assure you that human

society must have nothing less than such a miracle, or it will go to a bad place in an astonishingly short time.

In this address I can give you no theories. I can give only short hints and opinions, based on lifelong study and hard experience. But I am ready to explain and discuss those opinions at any time as explicitly as you like. In this country, the country of Henry George, I need not be explicit on the injustice of private land-ownership, and the advantages of common possession of the soil.

I started in Holland, six years ago, a Society for the Common Possession of the Land. This society still exists, and I consider its experimental work extremely important and instructive. But I have, in the course of my personal experiments, found that common possession of the soil is utterly worthless, even pernicious, if the community to which the soil belongs is not well organized. Private ownership in the hands of a good landlord is eminently preferable to common ownership in the hands of a badly trained and poorly organized community. This is the clue to that puzzling but generally acknowledged fact, that land-communism as it still exists in Russia, Java, and other countries, is no advantage but a strong impediment to the welfare of the population.

*Organization*, strict, powerful, perfectly functioning organization, *that* is the all-commanding condition of communism in general and of land-communism in particular. I might even go so far as to say that the better organized a community is, the more complete will be the form of communism which it can stand. In an absolutely perfect organization, to which the human race will perhaps adapt itself in a thousand years, the idea of private property or possession would have lost its meaning altogether. A faint hint of this condition we have on a very small scale in the well-to-do household of a wise and loving family circle.

But it would be a sad mistake to think that because we can never expect the wisdom, culture, love, and intelligence necessary for a perfect form of communism in the great mass of the humanity of our days — that therefore every nearer approach

to communism is impossible. Have we not made gigantic steps in advance toward it in the last century?

The most important step, however, which I, after my experience, still think necessary, possible, and even imminent — is the communization of the means of production. Capital itself — and its investment — must be communized.

But capital in another form, and its accumulation, rent, ought to come first. The communization of capital and rent, the transferring of the accumulation of goods to the hands of the community, that is the first and more important step we have to make in the interest of all humanity. In a way this is done already in the coöperative societies which are existing in Europe. But it is not done methodically and rigorously. We may distinguish two schemes of organization. The first is that of the fanatic communist: His rule is: Labour according to inclination, award according to want. I say, by the right of my personal experience, that this rule is, at this mome[n] absolutely impossible, untenable, and pernicious.

The other rule, generally called that of the coöperator, is this: Labour according to capacity, award according to the work done. That is to say: Means of production, common property; accumulation — capital and rent — in the hands of the community; wages given according to the given work, after the standard of general appreciation shown by supply and demand; not doing away with rent and capital, but taking it out of the hands of the private individual, because no individual is strong enough to bear the freedom and the power of unbounded wealth. The rule includes free and ample reward of the most capable. Give the workman what he asks for his work, with this restriction only, that he shall work on so long as he is in full working condition, and that he shall never amass so much wealth as to free himself and all his offspring from the obligation to be useful to the community.

And here the great question presents itself: What sort of community shall that be in whose hands we trust the ownership of common goods? How shall it be localized? Who shall form it? How shall it be organized? Who shall be its members?

I have no space here to go deeper into this question. I can give only a few preliminary hints.

In the first place, we must not make the general mistake of identifying the community with the political state. We must remember the origin of the state, and the character resulting from that origin. The original state was formed for two purposes, for defence and conquest. And our present political state is a remnant of those times when every nation was also an economical entity, subsisting by its own means, and trying to subsist, if possible, by the conquest of other nations and the rapine of goods, taken or extorted by violence. This is the most important distinction we have to make in our present days. It has never been rightly and clearly made until now. On this distinction depends the coming solution of all social problems.

There are two forms of human groupment: The older form is the *Empire* held together by political means. Its aims are rapine, conquest, and defence. It tries to subsist on the work of subjects, subjugating workers, who are compelled to surrender a part of the fruit of their own labour. It implies the existence of a dominating group and a submissive, exploited group. Its power rests on armed force, on violence, and iniquity. Its symbols are the *eagle* and the *lion* — beasts of prey.

The other, newer form, is the *Commonwealth* held together by *economical* means. Its aims are a fair and honest exchange of goods for goods, a peaceful commerce, an organized coöperation for the common benefit, for the full development of human life and powers. It does not imply absolute equality, but it advocates no greater difference than is necessitated by different inclination, aptitude, and capacities. Its powers are science, mutual aid, good-will, and understanding. Its symbol is the bee, the animal of communistic capitalism — not defenceless, forsooth, but doing no harm where no harm is intended.

And this new organization is everywhere growing over and surpassing political, even national, boundaries. A great net of commerce and traffic is overspreading the world, and the commercial bonds of people of the most widely different nations are

often stronger than those of the members of one political nation. By the light of this fact we may easily see that the human community of the future will not be outlined by our present political boundaries.

It is true that the administrative and legislative order of society is yet entirely in the hands of the political state, and it is right and necessary that it should remain so for a long time; for this order at present may not slacken for one moment. But it need not always remain so; there may one day be organized an international commercial body which shall surpass all our political states in power and strength.

In the second place I think it utterly useless to wait for the political state to make laws for us, before we attempt to alter the present form of social organization. I should like to ask if all those who firmly believe in the necessity and possibility of a better social order are not absolutely free at any moment to join hands all over the world, and to form a body or corporation with exactly those experimental rules and institutions that they think just and rightful?

I put this question before all malcontents, before all socialists, all revolutionaries, all communists and class fighters. Why do you not all join hands and make laws and institutions and rules after your own heart, doing business in the way you think just, bringing capital into common possession, outgrowing and outwitting the political states and your opponents?

My practical experiments have given me the answer, which the theorists could not give me. The reason is that men are not at all the independently and rationally acting animals they think themselves to be. They are acting and thinking always more or less herdwise, under the influence of great leading minds, and strong spiritual currents. If they were thinking and acting rationally and independently, a great commercial body with a just and righteous social organization could easily and quickly be formed; and it would, because of its greater self-preservation and strength, easily outgrow all other human corporations and organizations. But in the present condition of mankind such a community will not be formed un-

less a great, powerful mind, a commercial and organizing genius, takes the matter in hand and sets all his life and heart to it. The fact is humiliating, but we must accept it.

Now, two things are very clear to me: In the first place, that I am not this genius; in the second place, that I may be able to find him, even to inspire him to his glorious task, at any moment of my life. That such a man may arise any day, and that his name will be more glorified by posterity than that of Cæsar or Napoleon, I firmly believe.

Have we not dazzling instances of the swift achievements of one single commercial or organizing genius. But we need not confine ourselves, in our search for examples, to the captains of industry, who worked with more or less selfish and narrow aims. We have the instance of a very generous-minded man who surely did not work for personal benefit, and who achieved a wonderful feat of organization that extended over the whole world. Whatever we may think of the Salvation Army we cannot deny that as an example of organization with unselfish purpose it stands unique in the history of civilization. This great body is the work of one leading mind. And we must all agree that it has done much good, on a gigantic scale, for the rescue of the destitute and the fallen.

But now, if you will allow me to say so, I should far more highly appreciate the creation of a Salvation Army which *prevented the making of destitutes and sinners*. For if one thing wants salvation at the present time, it is labour. On one hand we see the capacity for labour threatened by demoralizing extravagance. On the other hand we see thousands of men who are able and willing to work, starving and hungry, spending their time in enforced idleness in meetings and demonstrations, embittered by their own uselessness, spreading discontent, and disturbing the peace of the community. And all for want of organization!

To call this evil unavoidable would be a shame for human intelligence. Where thousands of hands are ready to work there ought to be bread, there must be bread. The only thing wanted is the brain to guide these thousands of hands. A

former speaker, when asked about unemployment, said: "God knows, I see no help."

Well, *I* dare to say I see it clearly enough. But it cannot be given like a drug, with immediate effect.

Often, when I was practising medicine, patients came to me, asking my help, wanting to be cured — patients who were ill in consequence of a disordered, dissolute life. And when I told them that I could certainly cure them, if they would give up their way of living, eat no big meals, drink less wine, and live more soberly and wisely altogether, then they said, "Oh, no! I want you to cure me at once with medicine, and without changing my way of life." These people I sent to another doctor.

And so it is with the question of the unemployed. Surely their condition is not their fault, but the fault of the community; and that fault has to be bettered methodically and slowly.

In the first place, no help for the unemployed can begin with the unemployed themselves. I once tried to help two hundred unemployed by starting a business enterprise with them; but it failed, and now I know why it was bound to fail. Any business man here will understand the reason; those workmen who get first out of work are never the most capable. They may be good, honest, useful, average workers; they are never the best of their set. Employers are shrewd enough to keep the best for the last. Any new scheme started with those middling forces is bound to fail.

No, the only way of definitely dealing with the great evil is to start a business organization wherein unemployment is methodically prevented — an organization that never turns off its workmen — a *Labour-Salvation Army*. Such an organization is possible if it produces only, or principally, for the fixed market of its own consumers; if it starts no trades on speculation; and if it combines such different trades as to secure an employment for all its members by shifting the unskilled hands or adjusting the half-skilled for different work, according to seasons or temporal want.

And this sort of organization, this commercial body, it is that shall form the real commonwealth of the future. This is the

complete form of coöperation as Owen had it in his mind in England seventy-five years ago. This shall be the economical commonwealth that shall slowly outgrow and finally supplant the political one.

I know it is difficult for most people to accept this prediction, because it demands an effort of the imagination, and most people have little or no imagination. But all new ideas have needed that effort and have suffered from the absence of it.

This is why I bring before you the image of that widespread and powerful organization, the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army is not localized here or there, in small communities, as people expect the new social form of life to be. It is spread everywhere in the midst of the active world. Similarly the organization of honest and righteous workers and of business men must be universal, working everywhere, in the midst of the old society growing up among it until it outgrows and overspreads it, as a young, strong, fast-growing tree outgrows and overspreads the underbrush. We don't want to cut down, we simply want to grow. The rest will come by itself.

And like the Salvation Army we have to start small and grow slowly in the beginning like the seed of the coming tree. We need not be destructive, we may be only constructive. By growing, the healthy tree will kill the thorns and poisonous underbrush, and posterity will rest in its shade and bless those that confided the seed to earth. Such a Salvation Army is far more wanted than the existing one. What we need is a Salvation Army which would save the good character, the capacities, the morals, the intellect of mankind from wholesale destruction, by unbounded private wealth and its consequent extravagance, idleness and luxury; which would do business, hard, serious business, without falling into the snare of self-destruction that now awaits every prosperous business man; which would accumulate unbounded capital by trade and commerce, but never allow it to be squandered by private individuals turned into fools by too much liberty and power; which by a few strict, simple rules would exclude the usurer and the parasite, allowing no one of its members still fit for work to spend his



time in idleness or the common goods in insipid amusements; which would suffer neither spendthrifts in its organization, nor capable men starving for want of work; which would take care of its old workers and invalids in an honourable, not humiliating, manner; which would encourage art and science with unbounded liberality as the great uplifting factors of mankind; which would take care, with broad-minded generosity, of the education of its younger members as the great well-spring of human perfection.

Such a Labour-Salvation Army I am dreaming of. I am not the man to bring it about, for I am only a dreamer of dreams. But I pray you to recollect that all present reality had for its father a dream in past ages; and that the dreamer of dreams, in days gone by, was called a fool, just as I am often called now.

And again I want you not to be the slave of a word. You are free to call my dream communism, collectivism, socialism, co-operation, anti-parasitism, or to invent a brand-new label for it. But this I maintain, that it has the creative power of vitality, that it is no personal hobby of mine, but lives in the souls of thousands and millions; and even that there may be some of the youngest among you who shall see it turn some day into glorious *Reality*.

Vide "Questions," in Appendix II.

## CHAPTER IV

### WHAT I SAID TO AMERICAN BUSINESS MEN

**A**DDRESSING a number of business men at a dinner of the Economic Club of New York, at the Hotel Astor, New York City, April, 1908, I said:

I will assume that I am speaking here to the most powerful men of this great and busy country; to the minds that lead its real activity, its restless activity of preparing food, clothing and housing, safety and free development for the millions of their race. I am speaking to the great American business men. I may be mistaken, but I assume such men to be here, and I will address myself to them.

And you, business men, are the great centres of spiritual activity in the present period; exactly because that period is a shifting and preliminary one. The house of material ease and comfort, wherein mankind is to live for centuries and æons perhaps, and wherein he is to work for the attainment of his higher aims, that house is in process of being built. It is not yet finished; and you, business men, are the builders. You are at this moment the most important men in the world, more important than artists, men of science, or thinkers. These all have to make way for you, just as the tenant who is to live in the house has to make way for the builders, masons, carpenters. There is danger of their getting bricks on their heads, or of tumbling into the lime. The tenants are in the way and are treated as nuisances.

But mind you, business men! There will come a day, when the house is finished, when there will be a change, when the final stage of human society — the stage of real freedom and full opportunity for development is attained; then we shall be extremely grateful for your work, but your importance will diminish, and your merit will be measured by this standard: in how far you did business for the sake of business alone or for the higher goals of human kind.

Now there may be some of you who still think that everything is going on as it ought to go. "God's in His heaven and all's right with the world!" But the fact that we this evening are discussing the influence of socialism shows that the quotation must be somewhere in error.

Socialism means for some of you a wild theory, expressing stupid envy and discontent. For others, in other ranks, it means the only good and real organization of society, just what democracy is now meaning to most of you. But to all of you socialism means something that is spreading, be it for good or for ill, be it a danger or a blessing; it is spreading and it can be no longer looked on with contempt or indifference.

There are two attitudes toward socialism, which to me are equally unconvincing. The first is a sort of nervous, cowardly fear, crying for strong measures and the law, wanting a wholesale destruction by the electric chair; the other, a light-hearted contempt, waving off the question with a lofty gesture as something not worth worrying about. Both attitudes will simply increase the tension and, if continued, will bring on some deplorable outburst, which could have been prevented. If you are hostile toward socialism, well — never despise an enemy. There are no more terrible wars than unprepared wars, where the enemy is underrated.

And there is a form of socialism creeping now into the country — we are all too familiar with it in Europe — which is preaching war and provoking war. I mean the narrow, dogmatic form of Marxist social-democracy. And I believe it to be my special mission to bring before the American mind the falsity of the assumption of these sectarians that they cover the whole

field of socialism. A few days ago I had a conversation with your President. And it struck me as an instance of his sharp insight into the condition of the country that he fully realized what the spreading of the Marxist dogma of class-consciousness meant. He had especially wanted to see me because he knew I was fighting against the dogma. And I have been fighting it for nearly twenty years. Do not underrate the danger. It may be quite true that the American people will never stand anything like a violent revolution; I agree that the hope of an immediate overthrow of the present system, which some of these fanatics profess, is more illusory here than anywhere. Yet do not forget that even an attempt would be extremely deplorable, and would cost certainly a great amount of money and very likely blood. So if we can do anything to prevent it I think the effort worth while.

And I know that something can be done to diminish the tension, to lessen the sentiment of bitterness, to give an outlet to the pent-up feeling that social condition must be improved, whether by good-will or by hate. That there is a pent-up feeling of this sort, I reiterate; it would be folly to deny. The floods are at the top of the dykes. By wise measures they may be drawn into the right channel and become a blessing to all; or through stupid contempt or neglect they may break through and spread ruin and destruction.

Now let us begin by discarding any names and "isms" and look to the real heart of things. What is it that is wanted and generally approved, apart from party programmes and sectarian creeds?

Not equality of conditions but equality of opportunity. No man an absolute master of his fellow men, no slavery — individual freedom, but freedom limited and restricted by common interest, so that no man's freedom shall infringe upon another man's freedom.

Is there any man in this gathering who dares oppose this view? And if you want to call me a socialist, do; all of my socialism is in that simple proposition. So according to my view if you endorse this proposition you are all socialists.



And do you maintain that this limitation of individual freedom is not to your liking, and that you want to have it larger in your own behalf, with no restriction upon your power to aggrandize yourself or to maim the liberty of others — well, then, I will take my revenge, and will label you anarchists, if you please!

Now, President Roosevelt warned me of the visionary man, and I have some suspicion that he meant *me*. But if I am visionary, I want you to be very practical. And you will perhaps agree that the practical man is sometimes not the worse for listening to the visionary. I know for instance a visionary who has had some slight influence on the destinies of this very practical country. I trust I may mention the name of Christopher Columbus without being suspected of trying to compare myself with him. But I, too, like the visionary Columbus, once sailed in my small and frail craft into the rough waters of business life. I did not reach the land of promise, but I did undoubtedly signal it, and you need not go very far to see what I have seen.

The great defect that I see in your social organization is that it works badly. It is a leaking pump. Wealth is not economically and justly distributed, but wasted for the most part; and Mr. Hamilton Emerson, an American authority on shop efficiency, has calculated that the United States is run on a 5 per cent. efficiency basis.

So I am looking for an organization that works better, without waste. I want a pump that does not leak — one that, simply because it does not waste, will engender no despots or slaves, no paupers, no unemployed, no malcontents, no drunkards. And the way to stop the leak is *coöperation*. Now, may I quote a few lines from history? Hoiyoake, writing of an event which all the world now remembers as epoch-making, thus describes a gathering of spinners at Rochdale, England, sixty-five years ago:

At the close of the year 1843, on one of those dark, dense, disagreeable days of our English December, a few poor weavers, out of employment and nearly out of food, and quite out of heart with the social state, met together to discover what they could do to better their industrial condition. Managers had

capital and shopkeepers had the advantage of stock; how could they succeed without either?

They would commence the battle of life on their own account. They would, as far as they were themselves concerned, supersede tradesmen, mill owners and capitalists. Without experience, or knowledge, or funds, they would turn merchants and manufacturers. The subscription list was handed round—the Stock Exchange would not think much of the result. A dozen of the Lilliputian capitalists put down *two pence* each.

So this wild, pitiful dream was launched—set adrift in mid-ocean, on the stormy waters of the nineteenth century.

Thus writes the historian. And was it a pitiful dream? Well, there is a movement known as the coöperative movement in England. This movement comprehends a vast chain of productive and distributive centres, which year by year and inch by inch has elevated the standard of living of all the lower middle class of England. In 1906 the whole-sale department alone did a business of *a hundred and four millions*; and this is an item only in the budget of the unified coöperative movement of Europe. And from six nations of Europe look back in retrospect to the Rochdale Pioneers of 1843, who caught the vision, and dared, and won, and as truly founded the coöperative movement as Washington and his compatriots founded your republic. The original Rochdale enterprise still exists. It has an annual trade of one and a quarter million, and employs three hundred workmen in its workshops and stores.

But the Old World's coöperation is only partial. Productive coöperation is somewhat developed, coöperative purchase and distribution is largely developed, and to a certain extent you have the same thing among your own Western farmers. This sort of coöperation excludes the middleman. It stops one leak—an important one. But it stops only one, and I want you to do better and stop all leaks.

I tried a practical experiment myself to show how far this could be done. I tried to stop all leaks, and to have all produce go direct to the consumer, the consumer and producer being unified by common interest, so that there should be no

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waste. The enterprise went wrong for one very simple reason; bad management, which could not keep pace with the rapid extension of business. But it furnished me ample proof of what could be done by good management.

By good management on strict, severe business lines, a company can be started that goes in for production and distribution of all the wants and commodities of life without waste. It can stop all leaks, exclude all middlemen whose function is not really necessary, exclude even the stockholder who draws from the concern without giving of his effort in return, who sucks the producer, who bleeds the business and weakens its growth. And it would strive to keep the profits, above the liberal wages and dividends to producers and consumers implied in the co-operative system, within the business.

I say all wants and commodities of life. This is much indeed, and means a big thing, but you in America are not much afraid of big things. On the contrary, I should be ashamed to come before you with a mere trifle. Your coöperative business must also exclude the landlord and private landowner, who makes indeed a terrible leak and dangerous waste, especially in America. And yet you must take care that the feeling of ownership by the industrious tenant is kept; this can be done by withholding the sale of real estate, but letting it on long lease, even hereditary lease, under such conditions that the tenant may use it as his full property on condition that he shall not abuse his rights of ownership. I have quoted the Rochdale Pioneers to show how a rich forest of coöperation has grown from an acorn planted in the stern soil of modern industrialism. And now shall I attempt a local illustration? Just one, and only an illustration, I beg you to understand.

Here I am told there are three or four hundred thousand Italian immigrants banked up — too many for your city's needs. These Italians are in very large part from the agricultural districts; their hereditary status is agricultural. Yet your philanthropists look with doubt if not with despair on propositions to assist, or even compel, these immi-

grants to pass on to the interior of your vast country and there, as farmers, assimilate with the body of sound American life.

Well, gentlemen, I have talked with some of your experts on immigration problems. They tell me the Italian will not go to the interior because he gets lonely there; because he misses his religion, his gaiety, his friends, and because he cannot understand the social customs and cannot learn the American farming methods quickly enough. But suppose the Italian went South or West or right out here into New York state; suppose he went not as a lonely individual, nor even as one family, but went with scores of his kindred to a farm village, such as he remembers in the lovely valleys of the Apennines or on the Lombardy Plains of his native land. And suppose he went so capitalized by 5 per cent. philanthropists that he could spend a year learning, and would have the incentive of early proprietorship, under perpetual lease, of his land. Would the Italian as an American settler then fail?

He would not fail, I am sure. And he is clannish, and has already many of the instincts of the coöperator; he could apply such principals as I am speaking of to you; he could realize a better form of society, and would have an inestimable advantage, of an immediate sort, in his competition with the waste and spoils and partial anarchy which prevail in the neighbourhood to which he can go.

This example I have quoted as an illustration. I quote it to suggest the superiority of coöperation, or economic socialism, over your present social machinery, even for the tackling of recognized and pressing problems with which your present machinery is confessedly unable to cope.

And now for the larger plan. For the sake of definiteness we will call it here "The Coöperative Company of America." Complete theoretical detail can be had by anybody who is interested — detail applied to America as far as my own excessively limited experience with America goes. I will divide the plan into "Theory," "Practical Problems," and "Proposed Solutions."



## HAPPY HUMANITY

## THE COÖPERATIVE COMPANY OF AMERICA

1. *Theory.*

To provide a BUSINESS whose object will be to harmonize the demands of producers and consumers and to eliminate waste.

To increase gradually its activities and scope until it takes in all industries.

To make this business economic exclusively — entirely divorced from religious or political entanglements.

2. *Practical Problems.*

1. To obtain capital.

2. To provide wise, intelligent, and able direction of the company's affairs.

3. To insure continuous or practically continuous activity and employment for all the members.

4. To arrange for an indefinitely extended existence and extension.

3. *Proposed Solutions.*

1. Invite capital and offer inducements for its co-operation and use. Offer stock and pay dividends — the larger the better — but make a provision that the stock may be replaced within a limited period by 5 per cent. first mortgage bonds, in an amount equal to the book value of the stock. This reduces the dividend outgo and loss to the corporation to an interest expense; and a sinking fund should be provided to retire the bonds ultimately and to retain the ownership in the entire property, real estate and personal, in the hands of the workers, directive as well as productive.

2. Obtain and control the very highest order of intelligence and skill, professionally and mechanically, and the very best directive ability by providing the opportunity to satisfy ambition, present and future, and then to satisfy as to remuneration. If rightly conducted the

organization should be able to do this without difficulty.

3. (A) Produce the various commodities and offer the production by improved and coöperative methods, in the most economical manner and of the finest and best qualities — i. e., be able to produce for less than any one else.  
(B) Coöperate with the customer, the client. Share profits with him, retaining only enough to insure that the business of the organization and the interests of its members are in constantly bettering condition. To be unselfish with your own organization you have to appeal to the selfish interest of your source of revenue — your customer.
- 4 Provide for the relinquishment of a member's stock on the severance of his connection with the organization. This stock to be purchased by the company and so to be available for new members.

So much for the outline. I leave it to you whether there is a fundamental error or an essential impracticability in it. None has been pointed out to me yet, and I have discussed the plan with some of the best business men in America. There are a few concerns in America working along such lines now, and they are eminently prosperous. But they apply the principals only in a special branch. The great strength and tremendous prosperity can be obtained only by the combination of various trades and agriculture, gradually established and extended along the lines of least resistance. The margin between actual cost and retail price is very high in this country; rents are very high; the waste of leakage in the form of divided profits, advertise-

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\*Vide, Appendix I. Also Mr. William T. Hoggson's article, "The Co-productive Company of America," in the *Survey*, September, 1909.

ment and the like is enormous; and an intelligent stoppage of the leaks, foregoing high immediate profits, will have astonishing results.

You see, if you call my philosophy socialism, you must at least admit that it is a *socialism that pays*. And at this point I may give my reasons for thinking economic action preferable to political action, and for believing that economic action is absolutely necessary in addition to any legislation, if violent antagonisms are to be avoided.

The simple reason is that legislation implies the formation of a majority and the compulsion of a minority. Now, let a better social organization be never so desirable, never so possible, there will not soon be won over a majority who will believe in it without proof; and there will always remain, for a long time to come, a minority who will prefer the old private freedom with its liberty to transgress upon the freedom of others. Legislation would mean compulsion to these latter, and would require a majority which would believe without proof or practice.

Whereas by my plan, any minority may try and test its opinions by practice; it can give proof and example without compulsion, and will work educationally and not by force. On the other hand, when, later on, the majority has been won over to the newer system, if there is a minority which prefers the old freebooter's and pirate's freedom, it can be free to do so, and any individual may be free to abstain from coöperation and may fight his fight single-handed. All this is impossible if reliance is placed entirely or primarily on legislative methods.

The idea at once occurs: Why has not a system that will pay so well been tried ere now? The answer is simple: Because mankind is apt to look more for immediate private gain than for indirect advantage in the long run. And the short-sightedness of men is the reason why so many measures, as for example the taking of small profits on a large scale, the liberal payment of workers, the policy of interesting them in the business, have had to wait until quite recently to be tried. And yet they have proved eminently profitable. There is nothing so costly as egoism, and nothing pays better than a little unselfishness.

For the rest, most of the objections which I have heard raised have grown out of preconceived and utterly erroneous ideas of what was really wanted. I do not advise equal wages for the workers, but would liberally give to every man what his labour is worth in the labour market. I do not propose an immediate entrance of the workers into the control of the business, but a gradual and prudent education in the democratic handling of business. I do not advocate any kind of extreme, but a businesslike procedure along American lines, and this includes everything that legitimate business legitimately does in the effort to aggrandize itself — with only this difference, that the profits will be kept as far as possible within the business and used for extension and for the common good of all those who are engaged. I want no sacrifice of the incentive toward efficiency, but only a combination of material gain with moral satisfaction, and the elimination of the useless and superfluous. Only one objection with real force has to my knowledge been raised; it is that such a company, after becoming prosperous, would be tempted to close its doors and to cease expanding. This has to be anticipated by careful rules and the preservation of a high moral standard.

Now, gentlemen, I should wish you to — you can, if you will — beat all the great coöperative organizations of the Old World. The other day I got a letter from one of you, a great business leader in this country and a very wealthy man. He said: "I do not believe that you will ultimately get much satisfaction as the result of your effort to interest rich people in social matters worth doing." Thus says one of yourselves, gentlemen. Yet this same rich man offered ten thousand dollars toward this plan of mine.

Now I am going to challenge you. What this man said has been repeated to me from all ranks, especially from the lower ranks. "Don't be a fool or expect valuable social action from wealthy American business men." But, gentlemen, I want to be that fool; and I throw the challenge in your face. Are you going to put my faith to shame? Or are you going indeed to start a great and magnificent commercial structure, a wonder

and astonishment to the whole world and a blessing and source of eternal gratitude to posterity?

That is my challenge. To me personally it is all the same, for I should have no interest in the enterprise beyond the pride of having contributed a little toward its realization. I shall leave the work entirely to you; it is not my affair, but yours.

But to you it is everything. It is your opportunity to show whether the cynics are right when they say that you wealthy men have a different morale from other human beings, a class-morale as they say; that your only satisfaction lies in the pleasure of accumulation and the power of possession, and in nothing higher or better.

That is what these dogmatists, these class-fighters, these fanatics are accustomed to say. This is their strength, their power to make the dogmas spread lies in the doctrine that sooner can blood be drawn from a stone than fundamentally beneficial social action from a wealthy business man. This is the doctrine that I have spent twenty years in the effort to combat.

So, gentlemen, the glove falls at your feet. Will you smile at it scornfully and put these class-fighters in the right?

I believe not. I know, for sure, that all of you have more or less of religious sentiment. You want to be religious men, you want to serve God in your own way. But do you know what is the true and only test of whether you are serving God? I will tell you. The test is the inward, deep and indubious feeling of the *sublime*. You know what I mean. We all know what this feeling means, we have all felt some glimmer of that holy sentiment.

But now I ask you again: Have you ever felt that sentiment of the sublime in your daily actions, in your business activity? If not, well, then, I assure you that you have *not* been serving God with a conscience. For there is no other test; and this holy sentiment can be felt and ought to be felt in *all* human activity. I have felt it, sometimes, in the smallest of business matters, because I have known in large manner why I did them. And this sentiment is so precious that I would not exchange

it for all your millions, no, not for all the millions you could offer together. And the poorest man on earth I deem him to be who never felt it.

But now I offer you a chance to feel that sentiment, and without any sacrifice. You need not lose, you need not give, you may keep all you have. I propose only an investment of a safe and sane sort, and you have only to use some of your best business ability and long experience to set this enterprise in motion and to keep it straight in the lines of a higher business morality than hitherto.

And then you will feel a sentiment of the sublime going along with customary business actions, and you will *feel* that you serve God even in your life and your work of every day. And why? Simply because you will be doing what that profoundly religious man, the founder of this Republic, George Washington, urged you to do. And when you pass the triumphal arch at Washington Place and look up at the words carved thereon they will flame on you with a new meaning. And you will perceive what in business is possible and is needed: *to raise a standard to which the wise and honest may repair.*

And then also, gentlemen, I trust that we may add that *the event lies in the hand of God.*

## CHAPTER V

### A LAY SERMON ON THE PLAIN — WHAT I WOULD SAY TO THE AVERAGE AMERICAN READER

I AM impressed very strongly, dear American reader, with the notion that you do not like deliberation — at least not in abstractions. You want hard facts, something concrete and tangible, and you have no time for dreams and reflective musings.

Very well, but what are you in such a hurry for? For your own happiness? Not so; for Happy Humanity, if you please, though you may not be aware of it yourself. All of you, business men, statesmen, men of science, you are working for something *beyond the individual*, though most of you work under the delusion that it is personal happiness which is your aim. But think of the absurdity of working and worrying until your last breath for something that slips off with that very same last breath! People say you care mainly for dollars. Nonsense! it is the fun of the game you care for. But what makes you enjoy the game? Instinct, in-born qualities, driving you on, whether you are aware of it or not, to accomplish something be-

yond yourself, something for the benefit of Happy Humanity. It is the bee's fun to make honey — but not for himself. He will never taste what he gathers. He works for the race, like you.

Sometimes you call it "Progress"; lately you have been talking of "Evolution." It all comes to the same thing. It is some grand, glorious Future, worth living for and dying for. Call it the millennium if you like, call it the Kingdom of God, though this is said to be "not of this world." The American Kingdom of God must have some connection with this world, I am sure. And so must Happy Humanity.

But leave the goal aside. What is material to us is that the road to that great Future is momentarily blocked. And when there is a thick block in London City the policeman raises his hand and you have to wait. You may either swear, or joke, or meditate, but you *have* to wait. Hurry would not do.

Every entanglement demands some deliberation. Sherlock Holmes, before a very dark puzzle, sits down, lights his pipe, and muses. It's no use going ahead. It would be dangerous and ruinous.

And yet this is what America is doing. It is *pushing on frantically in a blocked road*. I will show you the fitness of this metaphor. It is appallingly true.

There are a hundred remarkable features of our present social condition, all denoting the same thing.



They all show *absurdity*, inner contradiction, the result of confusion. If you will have a little patience and follow my story, I will give you instances.

What do you think, to begin with, of *starvation* as the result of *over-production*? Charming, isn't it? Most delicious.

But this is rather hackneyed. Another less conspicuous absurdity is *the wickedness of philanthropy* — terrible thing when you come to realize it. It makes one's head reel and one's fingers tingle. When we try to be very good, exceptionally good, Christ-like, then we are sure to do more harm than in any other way. It is the one reproach I have been used to hear since I tried to mend my life and do something for mankind, the one bitter, scathing, scornful reproach — and alas! how well deserved — that I was too philanthropic. Philanthropy — the word intended to mean "love of mankind!" — now denotes a vice, and a philanthropist is a dangerous and harmful individual. Every business man knows that philanthropy in business is wrong. It engenders all sorts of evil, laziness, corruption, deceit. It brings ruin and disorder. It slackens progress. The business man is quite right. He has to be clever and hard, not philanthropic.

But here again I come into confusion: is not all human activity business? And how can anything be wrong in business and right outside of it?

Philanthropy in our days, at least the usual com-

monplace form of it, is never right. It is always pernicious. It is like covering up dirty wounds with sweet paste. It is like the tenderness of a careless mother who leaves her baby alone with a pincushion, and when the pin is well sticking in baby's throat and the poor thing crying for mercy, soothes it and hugs it and gives it sweets, and never looks for the pin. It is like perfuming instead of washing. It is like burning incense in a stinking room instead of cleaning it up and opening the windows. It is to society what a deep drink is to the miserable poor. It is a highly anti-social indulgence in the gratification of personal sentiment.

*Philanthropy is a social narcotic*, dulling society's pains, giving illusions and visions of goodness and generosity, of charity and gratitude, where there is really nothing but injustice, sentimentality, servility, humiliation, and hypocrisy. And yet Christ taught us to be liberal to the poor, and to be charitable. True, but He did not teach us to be liberal to *the poor of our own making*. Nor did He teach us to be charitable *at the cost of others*.

There is no good in commonplace philanthropy, because it is unjust, unwise, and misleading.

There is no good in giving alms, because it makes people look for alms.

There is no good in bread-lines, because it creates the bread-line loafer.

There is no good in making city slum life attractive

or tolerable, because it will attract people to the cities who ought not to be there.

It is exasperating to see the waste of millions of dollars, the waste of high-minded effort, of noble self-denial even, in a struggle that makes the confusion only worse.

While I was looking for the root of the evil, thoroughly disposed to apply the axe there when I should have found it, I failed because I was too philanthropic. I had not the hardness, the sharpness of the business men. I indulged too much in personal sentiment.

In the first place, I was *not careful enough in my selection* of the men who were to help me. This was my first important blunder, the principal cause of my failure, a mistake which I shall most rigorously guard against in my next experiment.

Let us look at the problem in the clearest, simplest form. I wanted to live as a socialist, as a social being, as a comrade among comrades. The rules of such a life are nothing but: "Do not cheat your fellow man. Do not keep him away from the sources of wealth, in order to dominate and exploit him." Nobody, nobody I ever met, dared to object openly to these rules. This shows that they belong to true human nature, and are universal. They are the only way to Happy Humanity. But how can any man, nowadays, be sure that he does not deceive his fellow man, or dominate him? For if he is not

doing it consciously and on purpose, he is doing it *by proxy*.

When I put my money in a bank, the bank is handling it in some way I do not know. Yet it is my money and my responsibility. If I give it to a broker and let him buy and sell, he will enrich me, at the cost of others, or make me lose, to the profit of others; but all with my responsibility. If I buy and sell, or let others buy and sell for me, I am always trying to cheat somebody out of his money. It is done for me, to my profit or my loss, and I share the responsibility.

Whatever occupation I have, I get my money, and by means of it the necessities of life, through the hands of others, and I do not know whether *they* keep the rules of humanity. They may cheat and gamble and exploit. And I have to live by the money or, in other words, by the power which I get from them. I share the profits of their activity, but also *I share the responsibility of their misdoings*. I may be the most useful, the most disinterested, the most generous of men; I get my money — that is, my power — from unclean sources and I participate therefore in the most objectionable practices.

As a poet or an artist I may get a high price for my creations, and I may feel the satisfaction of living by honourable means. But this is very likely a delusion. For my books and paintings may be bought by swindlers and gamblers and oppressors.

They pay those high prices out of their ill-gotten power; they make me their accomplice by making me use that power to my benefit.

The clothes I wear may be made by poor, underpaid workmen; the bread I eat may come from the harvests stolen from starving Asiatic natives or Russian peasants. All the work necessary to keep me alive in comfort may be underpaid, wrung out of miserable serfs or wage-slaves somewhere on the globe. I do not know, I do not care, and yet *I share the dreadful responsibility* by profiting by it. There is no escape from this burden — not for the moderately paid professor, nor for the better remunerated statesman, minister, lawyer, or doctor.

Some will say: "I neither get nor spend more than is my due." But who knows what is "his due"? Who can say what a man's activity is worth? It is worth what he can get for it. In this age of confusion a man may get millions for the most useless, base, and pernicious activity. And any rich, dangerous scoundrel may direct all our activities by the power of his money and make us his accomplices and his lackeys, simply by buying whatever work we have to sell.

Stop! Here we are in the middle of the block. Confusion right and left! Voices rising in all directions out of the muddle — "I am not a swindler!" "I am an honest worker!" "I am useful!" "I do not speculate!" "I do not gamble!" "I gained

my money by hard work!" "I am paid for good service!" "I give large sums to educational purposes!" "I am a Christian!" "And how do *you* live, if you please?" "And what do you propose then?"

This chorus of indignation shows clearly that these people are all socialists, and want to keep the socialistic rules. Even the doubt of their integrity irritates them. They all want to be honest, useful, and to get nothing more than their due. So do I; but I know, what they don't seem to perceive, that there is not the faintest possibility of an approximately fair valuation of our activity. We get what we can, by means fair or foul. And our fair means are only apparently fair. We are doing our foul deeds by proxy. We let them be done by others in such a way that it seems as if nobody were to blame.

The managers do their duty, raising the dividends; the brokers do their duty, buying and selling to your advantage; you do your duty, taking care of the fortune of your family. Everything is for duty! Duty and honesty all round as far as the eye can reach.

On the top of the rock of social structure, in the broad sunlight of justice, you dine with your family, a happy, innocent crowd. Those who are crushed underneath, you don't perceive. Yet it is *your weight as much as anything else that crushes them*. Meanwhile you are radiating Christian virtues,

loving your enemies. . . . This is the ugly part of it.

In saying such things as I am saying now, one always irritates people, because they take it as a reproach. They look at you as if you were teaching them morals from a sinless altitude. But, with your leave, dear American readers, it is not *my* moral code, but *yours*, that you are violating. I don't talk of "loving my enemies." I very rarely go to church and I never call myself a Christian. But you do.

I cannot blame any man because he lives on the booty of the swindlers. We all have to do it. We all have to share the responsibility of the social evils. We all sit on the rock crushing the weak and the poor. But you cannot blame me for smiling at your "Christian virtues," can you?

Christian virtues, however, we may safely put off till the millennium. Happy Humanity will grow them — not we.

I think it is pardonable at this moment to allow swindling, cheating, extortion, exploitation of the poor to go on with our sanction and to our benefit. We are all practising the evil, no class excepted. All classes are scrambling for the top of the rock, rich and poor alike. They are all afraid of being crushed. The eagerness, the unscrupulous rush for money and power, is equally strong among the lowest and the highest. It is strongest among those who are in the way of transition from the bottom to the top. All

try to get as much as possible, as soon as possible, in any way possible.

But what I think unpardonable, and very, very objectionable indeed, is to profess, at the very time that you are trampling down your rivals, such impossible virtues as loving your enemies, and pretending that you agree with the Sermon on the Mount. This is the worst obstruction in the block, the thick of the muddle. How can we ever join in an honest effort for a higher moral standard of society so long as we practise the hypocrisy of confessing a creed of such unattainable loftiness?

No, I am not getting my livelihood in a better way than you. I too am profiting by the booty of the swindler; I am crushing the poor under my weight; I am living at the cost of the weak. I tried to escape, but it is no good.

But, indeed, I have *something to propose*, if you will kindly listen. But the exasperating thing is that although I *have* told it over and over again, and although it is so simple, so clear, so obvious that I never found a man who could bring a plausible argument against it, and although they have all said, "Of course, but —," they have nevertheless all stopped and turned the other way — their own way.

I proposed that those of us who really want to live without cheating our neighbours and without monopolizing the sources of wealth should join and work together, and try to find our livelihood by our own



work and mutual aid, until all our needs should be supplied by ourselves and our comrades, under just and fair conditions; and cheating, swindling, extortion, and deceit should be entirely eliminated from our group. I proposed to the labourer, the honest worker, who is complaining and envious of the idle rich, that he should work only for those who work for him, leaving the idle rich alone.

"Of course! of course! that's it! — that's very fine," they say. And then all those enemy-lovers and those caring-for-their-neighbours-as-for-themselves altruists, and those hungry-and-thirsty-for-justice judges, and those fervent upholders of fair play and equity, those advocates of peace in the world, those followers of the prophet of meekness and humbleness, those every-Sunday-praying-for-the-Kingdom-of-God enthusiasts — they turned on their heels and went to their business, to fight for their families, at the cost of their neighbours' families. Fighting for as much as possible, as soon as possible, in any way possible, or, to be accurate, in any *safe* way possible.

This is so extremely exasperating, because it is so absurd. Why in the world is a thing, so reasonable as my proposal, not done and carried through long ago? Nobody could explain it to me. They said: "It has been tried and always failed."

Now, this is not at all a convincing argument. Steamboats had been tried and always failed before

Fulton. Railways had been tried and always failed before George Stephenson. Airships and aeroplanes had been tried and always failed before Zepelin and Wright.

Are all these millions of Christ-adorers not able to bring about something so fundamentally desirable according to their creed?

Besides, their argument is not true. I know the history of about two hundred little groups, in Europe and in America, which started with somewhat the same idea. They were not all failures. About half of them showed clearly that there was nothing essentially impossible in the idea.

Why is not at least one third of the civilized world energetically busy trying to realize a thing so fine and so necessary that it ought to come before all our other activities? Nobody could explain it. I know now the reason. But the whole thing is so wonderfully, so miraculously absurd that I cannot help feeling still a little exasperated when I see you Americans rush and push and crush, and nobody seeming to perceive what ought to be done first of all.

"You are naïve," said the Hollanders. "The world is too wicked." The result of the latest poll in Holland shows that at least two thirds of these Hollanders are believers in the Sermon on the Mount. At least two thirds are praying for the Kingdom of God every Sunday and doing their best to keep the world wicked the six other days. It *ought* to

be wicked, you know, because it's in the Holy Scriptures.

"You are a *bourgeois*-idealist," said the Marxist social-democrats. This label is on annulment of all argument. It wipes you out. After this you may go "pipen in an ivy-leaf," as Father Chaucer used to say.

The Marxists are no idealists. They too have their Holy Scripture, which is the most ingenuously elaborate tissue of abstruse nonsense ever written. They believe in class-war, historic materialism, and in the scientific valuation of human activity by the measure of time. This dogma is just as inscrutable to the outsider and as clear to the adept as the dogma of predestination. But though it is beyond human understanding, there are thousands of poor-in-spirit who believe in it, through grace, *quia absurdum*.

But the Marxists are a strong and restlessly active body. They spend thousands of dollars and tremendous amounts of energy in getting their dogmas accepted and their candidates elected. And they succeed because they know how to use the important forces of *authority* and *discipline* exactly as the church does. They use the authority of a doctrine and the discipline of a party. And they bring into service that important quality of men that we lately learned to call suggestibility, and that other, called gregariousness, that makes them run with the crowd.

In my efforts to spread my doctrine of co-production, I had failed to take these qualities into account, and that is the reason I was so much puzzled at the general inertia with regard to my simple and reasonable proposal.

No proposal, however obviously excellent and necessary, will find followers by the mere force of its reasonableness. There must be some authoritative pushing man behind. No ordinary man will be drawn out of the sphere of his own activity by the force of reason alone. He wants some exceptionally strong influence to push him, or some general current to draw him. He may suppose he always acts rationally; the truth is that he is always following irrational impulses of suggestion or belief. And because nobody is very acutely conscious of this peculiarity himself, nobody could explain what seemed such a puzzle to me.

Now I know that if I wished to make people move, I ought to have pushed them, and to have used discipline and authority. I was not only too much of a philanthropist in my first experiment, I was also *too much of an anarchist*. I made my proposal, met with no argument of any value against it, and consequently waited till people came to join me. And when some came I supposed that they had rightly understood me, and would know what they were about and would do what was wanted without my selecting them or commanding or pushing them.

I see the business men among my readers smile. They can exactly foretell the sequel of my story. This sort of proceeding can only lead to inefficiency, quarrelling, disorder, loss of money, bankruptcy, general distrust, and disappointment. Quite so, gentlemen; you are right. This was the sequel. But you have no right to blame me or to smile. It was that counfounded "love-your-enemy" and "give-good-for-evil" talk of yours that was to blame. It was your cant about Brotherhood and Humility and other Christian virtues.

I was an artist and a man of science. How could I realize, without learning it by hard experience, that these Christian virtues, on which our whole civilized society is said to be based, are at this moment entirely worthless and pernicious when it comes to actual doings and facts? How could I suppose, without having it rubbed in roughly, that you, though knowing all this, would be so devilishly absurd as to go on confessing and preaching these virtues every seventh day?

And here I have struck another confusion, not yet mentioned before, the *confusion about anarchism*.

The cartoons of *Punch* represent anarchy as an unpleasant sort of female lunatic in disorderly dress, with snakes for hair, a bloody dagger in one hand, the torch of destruction in the other, and a very black background of smoke, thunderclouds, and ruins behind. I suppose this belongs to the excep-

tional things that Americans like in *Punch*. Proudhon, one of the first upholders of anarchistic philosophy, said: "*P'anarchie, c'est l'ordre!*" Not so bad this either, in the way of confusion, I should say!

Now let me show you how easily *this knot may be unravelled*. Anarchy means *absence of authority* — but not of all authority, only *human* authority.

It is true that the anarchists of the last century said: "*Ni Dieu, ni maître!*" But they never added "*ni Vérité.*" And we must remember that in the beginning of the last century the ideas *Truth* or *Reason* were often used when people wanted to speak of God. Indeed, anarchistic philosophy never meant anything else than to proclaim *the exclusive authority of Reason or Truth*, which we may thus interpret: "No man another man's master, but all men obedient to one higher authority." Tolstoy says, "to the authority of God and Jesus." That other great Russian, Kropotkin, his fellow apostle of anarchism, says, "to that of Truth, Reason, and Science." According to my view the two are not so far apart.

No human authority, only the Divine authority of Truth.

No man another man's master, all obedient children of one God.

This is the true anarchistic Ideal as understood, to mention only one name, by a poet like Shelley.

Now I should like to ask you, American readers, declared adorers of the Prophet who said that no man can serve two masters, you who call yourselves democrats and who have shed torrents of blood to abolish the mastership of man over man, what *your* objection is to this Ideal?

*I* have an objection, which I will tell you.

I have found by personal experience, by a practical test, that ordinary humans of the present day, when you set them free from human authority, *run wild*. They begin by doing what they like, which is very rarely what you like; then they take from you what they can, and when you object to being fleeced entirely, they call you a despot.

I have also observed that, when you tell people to disregard all human authority and to trust only to Higher Authority, they turn crazy. If you call that Higher Authority Jesus or God, they generally become impossible and ridiculous — monks, ascetics, or cranks; if you call it Truth, Reason, or Science, then *they blow you up*.

This is my objection. But you see, I never pretended to be a Christian like you, American reader! I never declared solemnly, as you do or as you ought to do every Sunday, my willingness to offer my right cheek when beaten on my left. If I were a Christian, my objection would be inconsistent. I should have to let myself be fleeced and blown up meekly. And to the only man of our time who has been, to my

knowledge, something like an approach to a real Christian, the venerable Tolstoy, this was no objection. Also my excellent friend Kropotkin, that gentlest of gentlemen, seems to put such an unlimited trust in the power of Divine Authority that he would run the risk of letting all mankind loose, sure that no pandemonium would ensue and that all would turn to order and discipline by itself.

It was the opinion of these philosophers that anarchy, though it resulted in quarrels and disorder when tried by a few score of men, would nevertheless lead to supreme peace and harmony when the whole of Humanity tried it all at once. This appears to me like saying that, though a jump from the first floor window might result in disaster, a jump from the top of the Singer Building would be quite safe, because we should grow wings on the way. It's only a question of daring. Or this — that, if a trio or quartette of unskilled musicians was not a success, this was no proof that a full orchestra of them would not be harmonious.

Now, musical people will understand me when I say that I consider a rendition by a string quartette or quintette among the highest, most perfect of musical performances, provided the performers are masters on their instruments. Then they need no leader, no authority. Music is their authority, Harmony and Rhythm are their leaders, Divine Beauty is their master. This is an instance of ideal anarchism.



But a full orchestra, where all the performers are not great masters, needs a leader, and a good one. On the power of his strict discipline depends the beauty and harmony of the whole. His personality commands and pervades the performance.

I agree, however, that, if we could imagine a great chorus, or a great orchestra, entirely composed of artists so great that they would need no leader at all — this orchestra would surely form the most perfect Harmony and achieve the Highest Beauty.

Now I have good reasons for my opinion that, in the field of practical activity, there are still very few consummate artists among men. From which it is clear to me that they do want, for a long while to come, strong and strict leaders who know how to keep discipline. *They want Human Authority*, like the people of Israel, to whom was given a king, because of their sins.

But, on the other hand, realizing that human nature is essentially plastic and Humanity not yet full grown, I see no reason to deny beforehand the possibility of some better arrangement. Men *may* become some day all perfect players in the orchestra of Life; they may all grow to have the same delicate sense of rhythm and harmony and the same perfect obedience to One Divine Authority. That would mean that all grown-up individuals were of age in a broader sense than merely in years — it would mean

that Mankind had outgrown its infancy, that Happy Humanity was attained.

My idea about Ideal Anarchy, therefore, is to *postpone it till the millennium*. Here the American reader and I agree, I suppose. But with a difference.

In the American vernacular "till the millennium" is tantamount to *ad kalendas Græcas*, which seems to imply a very unchristian doubt of what is so decidedly predicted by the founder of Christianity. I fear that from your lips the phrase would mean the eternal continuation of an enslaved and confused mankind, which would go once a week into special buildings called churches, for the purpose of indulging in the illusion of future Liberation. It would mean the everlasting absurdity of a Society toiling under the whip of envy and greed, wearing for six days the convict dress, with its shameful marks of deceit and malice — and donning on Sundays the borrowed angel-garb of brotherly love, justice, and boundless gentleness.

To me the words mean a glorious promise, for which I am willing to give the best of my life, though I shall never see the realization of it with these eyes of mine. For though I do not at all pretend to be a Christian, and though I do not believe in the appropriateness of Christian virtues at this time, I believe most certainly in their gradual growth, and in their future perfection. And however "naïve" or "*bourgeois-idealistic*" it may be called, I dare to

*believe in the millennium*, in the coming of age of mankind, in his final Liberation — in Happy Humanity.

I believe in a Golden Age, as it has been vaguely forefelt by the Ancients, the Golden Age of the Future, Virgil's *Saturnia Regna*. I believe in a future of this our race, on this globe, which shall surpass in glory, beauty, harmony, and wisdom all dreams of poets and of prophets. I believe in it, and I believe that it will come to be, *because* I believe in it.

And then, only then, mankind will grow like a field of wheat, every stem standing independently, protecting its neighbours, but not leaning on them, nor supporting them; every stem rooted in the solid soil, and drawing its nourishment from the earth; every stem striving straight toward the sky, not pointing to its neighbours, but upward to the One Spender of Light, until it finally bows down in humility, heavily laden, and yields up its ripe harvest.

For like every tiny green sprout in the field points anew straightly skyward, so in every newborn babe the desire is renewed for Happy Humanity.

And this may be the reason why it was said that we could not enter the Kingdom of God unless we became like the little children.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

**I** WISH I could convey to my readers in these last few pages my conviction of the immense, unheard-of spiritual revolution that has now begun in humanity, unprecedented in any age, unconceivable in its consequences.

It has begun in religion, in science, in language. All social and material changes are only accessory to it, though springing from the same mysterious source.

It began with the better knowledge of nature a few centuries ago. Natural science has shaken the foundations of every religion.

Of course, for there has been no founder of any religion who knew so much about nature and the material world as we do now.

No religion of Orient or Occident can satisfy us. Nor Buddha, nor Jesus, knew what we know about the universe, about life, about natural phenomena, about man. This is obvious from their words. Had they had our knowledge, they would have spoken differently.

Yet natural science could not supplant religion and religious wisdom. Principally by the snares and pitfalls of language it became misleading, dogmatic, and created what is known as the materialistic conception of life and universe.

Like a ship in a squall, natural science is righting itself now from this fierce error, by its own tendency toward truth. First of all, in mathematics, the pursuit of all sciences.

Through the long, patient and obscure work of mathematicians a conclusion was reached for which I may use the words of an American, Cassius J. Keyser, "that any universe is a component of an extra-universal, that above every nature is a supernatural, beyond every cosmos a hypercosmic."\*

Let it be well considered what this means: the existence of the supernatural indubitably proven by that purest and strictest of all sciences, mathematics.

Physics and chemistry, by constant development, outgrow the childish conceptions of materialism. The discovery of radium and its emanations, of the relation between electric, chemical, and optical phenomena, brought new light about the constitution of what is called "matter." It reminded the enlightened scientist that "matter" was only a hypoth-

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\*The Universe and Beyond; the Existence of the Hypercosmic. *Hilbert Journal*, January, 1905. Among the founders of the new mathematical science may be mentioned the American, Benjamin Pierce.

esis, a more or less fanciful image, useful, but insufficient for any final explanation.

The wonderful law of entropy was discovered, showing that the natural phenomena are *not* turning round in a circle, like a cat chasing its tail, but changing in a definite direction.

Then the dark problem of time and space was tackled, and the science of modern mechanics has actually turned upside down all the accepted old ideas and conceptions, by introducing the relativity of time into our mathematical considerations.

There is no time absolute, nor is there any absolute measure of space. No "matter" can be conceived as a means for the conveyance of light. There is thought and movement, and the world as we know it is only so because of our way of perceiving it and moving in it."\*

The world changes as we change. And we are not the same, one second and the next. The world, nature, and our cosmos are what we made it out to be, and will change according to our movement—that is, our will.

In psychology the same enlightenment took place. Not only by the work of great psychical researchers, but also by the pure theoretical work of philosophers like Henri Bergson, who proved irrefutably that memory cannot be a sort of storage in the

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\* I have to name here, Lorentz, Einstein, Poincaré, Minkowsky.

brain, and that a human being must be something more than a body.

The structure of the cosmos became better known and the remarkable analogy between the innumerable suns of heaven, floating in definite streams, and the atoms building up all what is called matter, brought forward the thought, whether atoms could not be suns with planets and life on them, and the stars of heaven atoms of another matter.

The work of Darwin was completed in unexpected ways and the power of life, which materialists considered superfluous in the economy of the universe, reestablished in its significance as a directing energy.\*

All this, and there is much more that I cannot even mention, shows what a great, unprecedented mental revolution is going on. And I must point it out, because it is clear that our strife for happiness cannot be definite, stable and effective before that great revolution has taken place.

For one half of mankind is still bound by old, formal religions, teaching us to despise the world, and placing all bliss in what an Indian friend of mine, the Buddhist priest Anagarika Dharmapala, used to call scornfully "*the post-mortem heaven of Christians.*"

And the other half, educated by materialistic science in the belief that a human being is bound to

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\*Sir Oliver Lodge, *Life and Matter*.

vanish with the decay of his body, and the human race with the decay of this planet, cannot have a higher ideal, nor a deeper incentive for its endeavours, than a pleasant and comfortable material life, of eating, drinking, and being merry, with the device: "*Après nous le déluge!*"

There are extensive, spiritual currents, like theosophy, that try to unite mankind into one wisdom, without dogma, priests, and churches. Of these I can only say that they seem to me premature. They are too explicit, trusting on means of communion that are imperfect and science that is still too young. They tell us so exactly what we cannot yet know, that we must foster serious doubts about their sources of information.

Mankind wants facts, not idle speculation based on sheer intuition or fancy. We expect a new wisdom, not a new religion, nor another natural science, but a transcendental wisdom, valid for all men, Oriental and Occidental, uniting them by new, unknown means of communion. That will be the dawn of the new era of social equity, wherein mankind will use its earthly career for the foundation of a kingdom of God that is not of this world.

The current called socialism has taken the form of social-democracy and thereby entered a channel without outlet.

Social-democracy was based on scientific conceptions of half a century ago, that are now nearly en-



tirely abandoned. And this false start, this germ of materialism, proved to be its undoing.

Perhaps this is not yet clear in America, but in Europe the failure of social-democracy becomes more obvious every day.

It has lately been said by a German socialist,\* not unjustly, that capitalism has no better ally than social-democracy. For they are working both to the same end, making the position of master and slave more tolerable, and thereby more tolerated and more stable.

Class war, trade unionism, both are thoroughly capitalistic phenomena, and their effect goes to a constant strengthening of society as a capitalistic structure.

The worker gets higher wages, old-age pensions, all sorts of protection by law and government; the capitalist is obliged to treat his subordinates fairly, to be more careful, more humane and philanthropic. And so the old order, with its debasing results of idle rich and subsidized pauper, becomes more and more permanent.

Fatal consequences ensued from the fundamental, or, rather, germinative, mistake of Karl Marx, who expected matter to set the mind right, instead of mind to arrange matter.

When socialism is to become a glorious reality it will not be by letting things go their own way, or by

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\*Gustav Landauer.

bringing political power in the hands of the proletariat, but only by the supremacy of the spirit of wisdom, equity, and love.

What I proposed in the way of practical reform is very feasible, very easy, and simple even. Far greater miracles have been achieved by human beings.

Why was it not done and brought to success long ago?

Because every material growth is impossible without a spiritual germ, and that germ has to develop in an organic way.

What we call civilized mankind is apparently well organized. The king or president at the top, the responsible government next, the judge, the lawyer, the police, the citizen, each with his private sphere of power, all in their respective places.

But all this is only apparent; this is the material, political organization.

Money, the economic power, comes between, and we see a contest between money owners and political rulers, in which the economic power often proves victorious.

Yet political kings and economic kings are both subject to spiritual powers, to knowledge and wisdom, no matter whether they are aware of it or not.

And the real, lasting organization of mankind will

be the spiritual organization, wherein the kingdom of mental and spiritual superiority will supplant hereditary royalty.

True democracy cannot mean anything else but that the great majority of grown-up citizens consciously approve of and submit to the rule of the wisest and the best.

Its realization depends entirely upon the power of discernment of the average citizen.

Appointing a king by heredity is a poor haphazard method, a *pis aller*, an avowal of the multitude that it is not yet of age, unable to distinguish and to elect. Everybody knows that heredity does not give any certainty about the ability to rule.

Granting power to the owner of money, according to his wealth, is sheer folly in a society where every scoundrel is allowed to gather an unlimited amount of it, and the sources of wealth are placed at the disposal and left to the greed of any unscrupulous individual.

In a society the majority of which wants this sort of private piracy and irresponsibility, even the republican method of electing the ruler is powerless and a sham.

The citizens of such a society are still in a state of semi-barbarism; they lack elemental wisdom, and they cannot have the discernment to elect the wise, the just, and the good.

Such is a condition of things in what we are calling now civilized countries.

Yet this is not civilization as it was understood and foreseen by the best of humanity.

Nay, even the average citizen will agree, when his best self and profoundest conviction come to light, that this state of affairs does not respond to his ideal of a commonwealth.

He does not know, however, how it could be changed, nor does he see any opportunity for personal endeavour to change it.

The reason of this is that human beings are gregarious and must follow the principles and movements of the herd, otherwise they could not exist. They must be moral—that is, they must obey the “mores,” the customs of the multitude.

Yet the change will come, because we all want it. The tendency is universal, the pent-up energy is enormous and daily increasing.

Not by legislation can the change begin, for this would mean coercion of the majority, who do not see that the present “mores” are wrong and against the individual conscience, by a minority whose conviction is not reinforced by the proof of practice.

Nor can the multitude, by election, grant power to an individual whose conviction deviates from existing customs.

And yet such individuals are wanted, who will not submit to the principles of the herd, but show new ways.

To establish a better and lasting organization we want the authority of superior minds, who elect themselves, just like Cromwell, Washington, Napoleon elected themselves, but in a higher plane of spiritual activity. The multitude cannot find them out before they have shown their superiority by practical proof. After that they will be followed and supported enthusiastically, more so than either Cromwell, Washington, or Napoleon.

This leadership needs not to be confined to one man, it may belong to a group of men and women. What moves them must be the germ of transcendental wisdom, the spirit of equity and love.

American social-democrats, though they may not be so dogmatic and materialistic as the Germans, still believe in the power of the multitude to discern and elect those leaders that are wanted for the reorganization of society. They believe that socialists can be made beforehand, before any socialistic activity takes place, by reasoning and argument, in sufficient number to choose a truly socialistic leader, able to reorganize human activity according to socialistic ideals.

My experience, and the political events in France and Germany as well, have taught me that this

is an illusion, resulting from a want of insight in the psychology of the masses. A true socialist is quite a different person from a socialist voter, and a socialist organizer is still more different from a socialist political leader. Millions of socialist voters with scores of political leaders have not produced one single truly socialistic organization.

The man of genius able to change the human activity according to socialistic ideals cannot be found out by a host of socialistic voters. They would never elect him, and would very probably oppose his leadership if he were in power.

On my lecturing tours through America I addressed many thousands, and sometimes met with the most hearty sympathy and enthusiasm. I spoke to a number of people sufficient to form a splendid organization. Yet they all went home to their wonted business and followed the beaten track of custom, simply because there was no leading genius to organize them and to point out to each a new and better form of activity. A clever American friend of mine even laid a wager that I would never find, among successful business men in America, a single one who would deviate from his wonted course of work to initiate a new scheme, however easy and acceptable it might be to him.

I have not yet lost that wager, though I readily acknowledge the psychological truth in my friend's contention. Human beings are not only gregarious,

but also essentially customary animals, addicted to habit, tradition, and convention.

I found indeed clever and successful business men inclined, even determined, to carry out my plan. They were exceptional men, however, and the way I pointed out lay very near the track on which they had been advancing themselves.

I will not mention their names here, because the work itself, if it is successful, will make them known soon enough. They have to begin single handed, and will not find adherers and supporters before they can show results and successful deeds. So strong is human gregariousness and adherence to habit.

Freedom of mind, perception of new possibilities, can be found easiest among poets and artists. They also have the keenest consciousness of the present want and misery of the human race. Their imagination shows them what humanity could be and makes them feel painfully the contrast with what it is now. In them, if they belong to the true, genuine sort, burns the shame for human degradation and the fiery impulse of love to help and restore.

It was said in ancient times that the poet ought to go with the king, and it was Plato who looked for the rule of the philosopher-king.

In our time we want the artist, the poet, to go with the man of economic power.

The man who is to restore justice and equity in

human society has to be a poet as well as a business man.

Humanity can only look for happiness — that is, for movement in the true direction — by trusting to the leadership of practical men with transcendental wisdom.

The Emperor of the Chinese, two thousand years ago, was also supposed to be the man of supreme wisdom who took upon himself the burden of all the sins and transgressions of his millions of subjects.

This is the sort of kingship we want. Not crowned figureheads who distribute titles and orders, but great men of organizing genius and poetical temperament, with hearts heavy from the sorrows of mankind, and restless from the burning love to help them, seeing farther than their fellow men in the glorious transcendental future of the race, when nature will be conquered and this world will make place gradually for the next.

I found such poetical minds, pregnant with the coming glories of the future, but I found them not yet, as they ought to be, associating with the man of economic power and organizing genius.

And I found also that the idea is ripening of a *High Court of Humanity* establishing itself on its own account, voluntarily and forcibly, out of men who are conscious to possess, all alone or in combination with others, the organizing ability, the poetical imagination, the self-sacrificing love, necessary to



direct human activity and lead it toward salvation. During the latter part of the life of Tolstoy we had in him, who was a poet and a true king of humanity, full of royal love, a sort of individual conscience of mankind whose voice was listened to whenever he spoke.

But Tolstoy's influence was insignificant in comparison with what it would have been if he could have associated and worked together with men of transcendental insight and practical ability. As it was, he stood alone, unsupported and uncorrected, and said many things that we can hardly take seriously.

Wandering as I have been, on lecturing tours through Europe and America, I felt how necessary it is to bring into contact with each other those few individuals who could form by their combined qualities and activities the germ, or nucleus, of a better human organization.

It was G. S. Lee, the clever and humorous writer of "Inspired Millionaires," who called this way of working "*Spiritual engineering*." And that most fervent and gifted American enthusiast, Upton Sinclair, wrote to me with nearly the same intention.

I have been indeed prospecting for human happiness, and after long experience I found this the most promising way of using my energy efficiently.

If this nucleus consists of the right elements — and who can say beforehand that these elements are

absent among the millions of living men? — it will develop a power stronger than all political or economic groups. For its energy will be “directing energy,” which is also the energy of Life, the energy that changes, by one tiny germ, a desert into a wood. It ought to include the best individuals of mankind. But not therefore the most renowned, nor the most intelligent, nor those of best parentage.

For what they should possess in the first place are royal love and transcendental wisdom, and these qualities do not always bring high renown, nor do they appear only in distinguished circles, or in special nations and peoples.

These qualities are prerogatives of genius, and genius is more than a crown and sceptre, a symptom of divine grace which can show itself unexpectedly among all sorts and conditions of men, in all parts of the globe.

Human beings who combine deep wisdom with self-sacrificing love and practical ability are very rare. Yet men of genius have always been rare, and human progress nevertheless depended on them.

And where no single individual can be found uniting all these necessary qualities, it might still be possible to find different individuals who act as one being, united by brotherly love and the common feeling for mankind and its misery.

The average American is not aware of the depth and extent of human misery. Taking a good look

in the Old World, in Europe, in Russia with its millions of starving peasants, in India with three hundred millions living in the most dreadful destitution, in teeming, toiling China, he could see at the cost of what physical and moral suffering humanity exists and the few people of leisure live their comfortable lives.

And then, what sort of "happiness" is reached after all? How shallow and commonplace is it what the few rich gain by the toil and drudgery of the many poor!

I know wise people — Lady Welby among the number — who entirely reject the word "happiness" as indicating that supreme good that humanity needs.

They would rather speak of "enthusiasm," or "spirituality," or use that fine German word "*Begeisterung*." A high-minded contemporary Dutch author, speaking of Bellamy's "Looking Backward," called the material happiness depicted therein a "most horrible nightmare," and expressed his satisfaction that he would surely not live to see it.

I wonder whether the majority of New World citizens will understand that feeling. In the old countries, Europe and Asia, we have seen enough of the emptiness and insufficiency of material comfort and welfare to despise it as a final goal.

Most striking to the visitor from the Old World is the cheerful activity of Americans, their happy

belief in material prosperity as a worthy aim to live and die for.

In comparison with the American mental atmosphere that of Europe is gloomy and oppressive. Notwithstanding the numerous symptoms of progress, the increasing wealth of France, Germany, England, and the other countries, there is a general sadness, a lack of idealism and enthusiasm, a bitter, cynical, skeptical spirit pervading the more civilized parts of these nations.

England is quite representative in this respect. It is eminently successful, wealthy, formidable, and gloomy. It keeps a proud and brilliant countenance, hiding in a display of imperial glory the horrible sores of its civilization. In this sort of shamming the English are unrivalled. Nowhere is the capitalistic rule established more surely, or has entered more deeply into the souls of the people, rich and poor alike. The rich are moderate, philanthropic, intelligent, sportive, knowing how to balance the dangers of wealth; the poor are polite, servile, loyal, enjoying the alms of the rich and the splendour of pageants and festivities, like the Roman people their circus performances.

Where is, however, the great art corresponding to this political greatness? The greatest English author of to-day, indeed the only living English author of more than national importance, B. Shaw, is so brimful of bitterness and sarcasm that it is

considered the best policy among Englishmen not to take him seriously.

And I may point out as a very significant fact that the poet of fashion now in English society, perhaps the most widely read poet in pious, Christian, church-going, Sunday-keeping England, is a man who sang, a thousand years ago, the glory of wine and women, having no notion of something worthier to live for.

On board an Atlantic steamer I met a most charming, high-bred English lady who boasted that she had made presents to her lady friends of over fifty copies of the "Rubaiyat" of Omar Kháyám. And not less significant is this fact which I found true for nearly all the rest of European nations, that the man who is now rising in fame among them as the greatest author of the last century is that terrible, unsparingly lugubrious Russian, Dostoiewsky.

Omar Kháyám, the sincere prophet of frivolity, and Dostoiewsky, the relentless explorer of the darkest of human woes and shames, these two mark the extremes between which modern mankind is wavering.

And socialism, looked upon half a century ago as the dawn of liberation, is now increasing in extension, as social-democracy, but losing in true socialistic power and character, leaving a dreary sense of disappointment and fatigue in the hearts of the once zealous and enthusiastic adherers.

This characterizes the present gloom of Europe.

It will not do for America to scorn and scoff and call the Old World superannuated and dull, passing into extinction.

America is still feeding upon the remnants of Oriental and European wisdom. It has not yet developed its own philosophy. It is walking the same way as England, and when it has come to the summit of prosperity it will see the same precipices of extravagance and pauperism, of gloom and despondency, all around.

Then it will come to contemplation, and sit brooding, like the Old World is doing now, wanting wings, the wings of a higher spiritual life.

An American publisher said of one of my books that it was too disagreeable for the American reader.

But when the American will refuse to see the disagreeable reality in the pure mirror of art he will soon have to face it, far more disagreeable, in life.

When I used the word "happiness" in regard to humanity, I meant that state of mind that ensues from the consciousness of being on the right track — not any final condition.

I do not believe in "final" conditions of humanity. We never see an "end" to anything real. Wherever we see finality either the end or the thing itself proves to be unreal. And if I had to believe in evolution as it is understood by materialistic science, being a sort of see-saw between birth and death,

ending in its starting point and there beginning anew, I would rather prefer to stop at once and have done with all the trouble.

Once more I will lay stress on that tremendous insight whereto our present generation has come, and which is the essential feature in the spiritual revolution now begun, the critical insight in the inadequacy of language as an instrument for thought and communion.

This insight is entirely new to the human race, that suffered so long under the tyranny of the word.

I found it, as told, in the life-work of Lady Welby; I found it in the remarkable book of a young German writer of genius;\* I found it also in a witty and deep work by Allen Upward, called "The New World."

We are only in the very beginning of a new era of human civilization. Science, as Norman Lockyer expressed it, is not yet born, it is only conceived.

And language, the means of exploring the human mind and of binding human beings together in one union, has entirely to be regenerated.

This process is organic and cosmic and has to grow slowly, like all cosmic phenomena. And the first requisite for a scientific explorer and a wise man is patience.

We know that words and language are misleading, and yet we have only words, words, words.

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\**Siderische Geburt* (Sideric birth), by Volker, Berlin.

All that I have said I know to be preliminary and approximative. Yet a German socialist\* has remarked very truly that we have to reckon with approximative values in every science and most of all in sociology.

Allen Upward, in the book just mentioned, tells us how a boy once came up to him wanting him to "make his hoop round." He smiled at the appalling request that even God, though He might perhaps have been able to do it, never had fulfilled. But then he gave, instead of the unattainable exact roundness, the approximative one, sufficient for the boy to use his hoop and play with it.

I tried to make the hoop just round enough to play with it. I tried to give as much concreteness as Americans want in order to "see" a thing, and not more philosophy than they can patiently stand.

In fact, I am afraid that I gave too little philosophy. That is, I spoke more of material and less of spiritual concreteness than a wise man, aware of the far greater reality of the latter, ought to do.

Let there be then no mistake. It was not material comfort that I had in view, but something far above and beyond—something for which we have not yet words nor language to express it. Yet it must be reached *through* material prosperity.

The great thing is to keep in motion, to move on, though the wheels may not be perfectly round.

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\*Otto Efferts.



Motion is the secret of love, as was expressed by that Oriental tale about the ring which was always lost by him who wore it, unless kept in motion.

So it is about deeds, practical deeds that I have spoken, for the happiness always attainable for mankind is the feeling to move on in the direction of Right and Truth.

## APPENDIX I

### THE COÖPERATIVE COMPANY OF AMERICA

#### *Suggested Outline of Programme and Constitution*

##### THEORY

To provide a business whose object will be to harmonize the demands of producers and consumers, and to eliminate waste.

To increase gradually the activities and scope of the business until it shall include all industries.

To make the business economic exclusively — entirely divorced from religious or political entanglements.

##### PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

To obtain capital.

To provide wise, able and intelligent direction for affairs.

To insure continuous or practically continuous employment for those engaged in the company.

To arrange for an indefinitely extended existence.

##### DETAIL

#### *Capital and Shares*

A. Capital will be raised by offering stock. This stock will be dividend-producing; but provision will be made that it can be replaced within a given time by 5 per cent. first mortgage bonds, in an amount equal to the book value of the stock. This reduces the dividend-outgo of the corporation upon its initial capital to an interest expense; and a sinking fund will be provided in order that the bonds may be ultimately retired and the ownership of the entire property be left in the hands of the workers, directive workers as well as productive workers.

B. Permanent profit-producing stock to members only; this stock paying dividends and being amortized by lot. This

stock will be personal and not transferable. The share itself will become the property of the company by inheritance on the death of the holder, except that the dividends will be paid to the direct family of the deceased so long as his widow lives or the children are minors.

The number of shares any member will be allowed to hold will be limited, but at a high limit — a hundred shares of \$500, for instance, or five hundred shares at \$100. Any amount of shares will give one vote only.

Shares will be bought back by the company when a member leaves, at once, or gradually within a given limit of time. The member on forfeiting his membership will have no right to dividends or to a vote; if his shares are not purchased promptly, they will be regarded as a loan, and interest will be paid him until such loan is liquidated.

The members will purchase their shares outright or receive them as reductions in wages. Or they will be entitled to higher wages and no shares; in this case they will not be entitled to a vote and will receive no dividends. So the shares will be a voluntary investment.

#### DIVISION OF PROFITS

All net profits will be apportioned as follows:

Not less than 40 per cent. will be kept as a fund for the extension of the business and for purposes of general interest to the members, after the liquidation of the original debt, with its dividends and interest as previously specified.

Forty per cent. will be divided among the members, in proportion to the amount they may hold in shares; this being over and above their wages.

Twenty per cent. will be paid as dividends or rebates to the associates, to be later specified.

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE COMPANY

##### *A. Trustees. General Management*

The Board of Trustees will be the original constituents of the company. They will constitute themselves by incorporation, and will have entire control of the business.

When the number of members shall grow to one thousand, or after seven years shall have elapsed since the incorporation of the company, the members will elect one new member to the Board of Trustees, to succeed an original member whose resignation shall have been determined upon by lot. After this every member of the Board of Trustees resigns, one each year, by lot, and the members of the company will choose his successor by ballot, whether from within or without the company, the choice being absolutely free. Membership will be for a term of years, and the members will have the right of recall of any trustee by a three fourths vote, after complaint shall have been publicly registered for a specified length of time.

The Board of Trustees, within the limits of the impeachment power of the members, will be the highest court of appeal, and will appoint the general manager for the company, and fix his salary. The members of the Board of Trustees itself will receive no salary.

The general manager will appoint all sub-managers and will nominate to the Board of Trustees all candidates for membership. Every sub-manager will be responsible for the department of which he is the head. The wages or salaries of the sub-managers, and ultimately of every working member of the company receiving a wage, will be fixed by the general manager.

Every member of the company will be bound to strict obedience to his superiors *as far as business is concerned*. The general manager will have the right to fine or dismiss any member, but the delinquent will have the right of appeal to the Board of Trustees.

### *B. Membership*

The company will be composed of members and of apprentices, and the members will be divided into two classes, voters and non-voters.

As a preliminary to membership, an apprenticeship of one or two years will be required. Only vigorous and thoroughly healthy individuals will be considered for apprenticeship—individuals with good antecedents; and no one will be allowed more than a two years' apprenticeship, except by special dis-

pensation of the Board of Trustees. If after two years the apprentice is rejected as a member he must leave. While an apprentice he will receive a standard wage, according to the class of work that he does.

The apprentice will become a member through election by the Board of Trustees on nomination by the general manager, who will consider the report which the immediate sub-manager in contact with the apprentice will make. The opinion of the members associated with the apprentice will likewise be consulted in the choice of members.

Apprentices will be dismissable on short notice, for definite or indefinite reasons, on the suggestion of the general manager concurred in by the Board of Trustees; members, only on proved charges of misconduct.

Admission to membership will be without distinction of sex. But the wife and children of the member will not be considered as members unless so constituted independently.

Members will be voters or non-voters according as they are holders of shares. A member, not a shareholder, will have passed his apprenticeship regularly and will be entitled to the acquisition of shares without preliminaries.

### *C. Associates*

Besides members and apprentices, who will work in the company, there will be associates, who will be the customers of the articles produced by the company. These associates will have no control over the business, but will receive, according to the amount of their purchases, the 20 per cent. of the total net profits previously specified. The sale of goods will be granted impartially to all who may wish to buy.

### GENERAL POLICY OF THE COMPANY

The company will work, legitimately but aggressively, on strict business lines. It will begin in some department of industry or commerce offering as varied employment as possible and where with good management success will be quickly assured; it will then, especially in its early stages, proceed along

the lines of least resistance. Its policy will be to expand continuously, embracing as many trades as possible, in such manner as to avoid the necessity of unemployment for any member by shifting the unskilled hands and training the half-skilled hands for different work, according to season and opportunity. The positive aim of the company will be to embrace all trades and all branches of commerce necessary to produce and distribute the commodities for all real wants; real wants here including the more spiritual as well as the more material wants. Give-and-take will be sought with the supply and demand of the general market, in order that the company may never become a closed enterprise but may always have an inflow of money-capital; 40 per cent. or more of the profits being reserved, according to the constitution, for purposes of extension and of general welfare. Gradually will be formed a community, an organized whole of workers who are at one and the same time producers and consumers, and in this community none will be able to live on the products of the common activity without having contributed to it in the form of work, unless this is consciously and voluntarily allowed, as in the case of invalids, children, and those workers whose work is recognized not to be of direct material utility but of higher import — as artists, thinkers, men of science.

The company will as soon as possible take in hand the education of the children of all its members, in so far as this is not done by the state, and it will, as its means allow, take in hand the further education of promising young children or of members, in a liberal and broad-minded manner. It will, moreover, as soon as its means allow, further in a liberal way those movements of science and art which can be considered as generally approved. It will not confine its activity in these directions to its own organization, but will work outside as well. In its production the company will draw the line at really dangerous and harmful commodities, such as strong drinks.

As the company will permit none of its members, without good reason, to live without actual work on the products of the common activity, so it will not allow its members to suffer

for the want of employment. The leading concern of the company will be the distribution of employment and its proper remuneration. After having become firmly established, the company will be conservatively liberal in its admission of members, and will never shut out from membership those who may be willing to join and cannot be said to offer a danger to the whole.

In the arrangement of a wage-scale, union wages and the price given for labour in the common market will be considered, but the payment in the form of shares will be encouraged.

In the case of the invalidism of a member, the number of years of service will be taken into account. Sixty-five years' age will entitle the member to a pension, again determined by the years of service and the wage received during the working period.

The company will have no political or dogmatic colour whatever, leaving all questions of politics, like those of religion, to the individual conscience of its members.

It will always respect the laws of the state in which it is obliged to work, and will avail itself of their advantages.

It will admit the utmost freedom possible in matters of spiritual import.

#### OUTLINE OF THE ACTUAL BUSINESS WORKINGS OF THE COMPANY

The company will be divided into several departments:

General Department (banking, administrative). Under the general department will be such departments as bear only indirectly on business, as departments of education, of hygienic supervision, etc.,

Industrial Department.

Agricultural Department.

Real Estate Department.

Distributive and Commercial Department, etc.

General Department. — Savings bank for members and non-members. Loans of personal credit to members only. All speculating finance strictly barred. Net profits on banking dividend with other net profits. Insurance of life, against fire,

invalidism, etc. General direction, coördinating all departments.

Industrial Department. — Bakeries, dairy manufacturers, factories of preserved food, etc., all conveniently placed to the sources of production of raw material; mills, sugar, factories, etc.; shoes, clothing, etc., the arts and crafts.

Agricultural Department. — Market gardening in deserted tracts in the neighbourhood of large cities; dairy farms, etc.

Real Estate Department. — At least 50 per cent. of the initial and accumulating capital should be turned into real estate. Land or habitation given to members on short lease, with longer terms later on, after capacity shall have been shown, so that the property will become practically the member's own during his life, and after, so long as the family continues to work in the company; or should the member desire to transfer within the company, or to it altogether, his leased property would be practically bought back from him, deducting the unearned increment and the initial value of the property, but taking into consideration such improvements as he may have made.

The farms will be limited in area (to fifty acres, for example), and will be united with coöperative buildings where the company will provide the fertilizer, etc., at wholesale prices and will rent out the machinery; moreover, dairy manufactory and canning apparatus. In this way every lease-holder will work independently, but with the facilities and economy of coöperation.

Distributive and commercial departments. The formation of a market by enterprising business methods; careful lists of associates.

Coöperative stores, to operate as previously specified. The dividend-receiving member or shareholder who is also a purchaser at the coöperative store will receive the rebate, or dividend, of an associate, and thus will receive dividend from both ends of the operation.

The commercial department will purchase wholesale for the needs of all the departments of the business.



**FIRST MEASURES IN LAUNCHING THE COMPANY**

Formation of a Board of Trustees of high standing and undoubted honesty and popularity.

Choice of a very capable general manager.

Announcement to the public that the company: \

Goes in for the production of unadulterated food and of articles of general and real use and of first-rate quality.

Is based on the principle of the prevention of unemployment and mal-employment.

Has no political or sectarian colour whatever.

Aims at the general welfare of society.

Demands no other support than that of regular customers.

## APPENDIX II

### QUESTIONS

At the close of Doctor Van Eeden's address at Carnegie Hall (see Chapter III, Part II) questions were received from the audience in writing, and were answered as follows:

*Question:* After all, is not communism an outworn theory which has been replaced by modern socialism, appealing to political methods? The trust can crush communistic settlements like flies, but the law can dispossess even a trust.

*Van Eeden:* You are welcome to call communism an outworn theory — then it is not my theory. I don't know what you understand by communism. Communism as I describe it to you is not an outworn theory. A public library is not an outworn theory, nor is Yellowstone Park. "Which has been replaced by modern socialism." Well, replace it by what you like, call it to-day communism, the next day socialism. "The trust could crush communistic settlements." There you are! Colonies again, communistic settlements — I don't want communistic settlements. I want large organizations. "The law can dispossess even a trust." Quite well, but then the men who constitute a trust, they will begin anew; they are not the better for the law. The law, yes, can help a new organization, but never, I am convinced, can it run counter to an organization that tries to do right, that tries to work in a just and equitable way, that tries to bring about a peaceful reorganization. Never, never would public opinion stand for that. (Applause.) At least, not in my country, and you may be sure, not in yours either. Perhaps in Russia, I don't know about that.

*Question:* It has been stated that you yourself have loaned a hundred thousand dollars to communistic enterprises in Hol-

land. Has the moral sense of these communists ever led them to repay the loan?

*Van Eeden:* This is a charming question. The statement is not strictly true. I have not loaned a hundred thousand dollars — I have loaned it until eternity. I have lost it. And I don't regret it. People who take only money into account will say, "There is so much money gone to waste"; but there are people, too, who will tell you that good has been done; and I believe that there are such people here too. (Applause.) These will agree that I have gained more than I have lost.

As for the moral sense of these communists, who spent the money, they of course cannot repay it. And if their moral sense was not sufficient to make them see that they should at least try to repay it, as it was not in some of them, then it is only a warning, when you begin again, to choose only picked men with sufficient moral sense.

*Question:* You are an artist, Mr. Van Eeden. Have you found that in Europe socialism tolerated art? And is not art essentially individualistic, so that it can never tolerate socialism?

*Van Eeden:* I utterly disagree with the sentiments expressed in this question. As I conceive socialism, it will mean the great reconstruction of art. (Applause.) An organization, such a community as I see before me, will give the artist real liberty to devote himself to his art. I have myself the feeling that art is very intimately connected with socialism. After my social experiments I have gone back to art, because I still consider art as the greatest power in regenerating humanity. (Applause.)

*Question:* How will communism dispose of wealth as it stands in America to-day and do justice to the holders of it?

*Van Eeden:* Communism will not dispose of wealth by summary means. At least not communism as I conceive it. Such wealth as communism cannot win for itself by just means, by honest work, it will leave in the hands of individuals. It will accumulate wealth by working hands and working brains, and lay that wealth in the hands of a better community. "And do justice to the holders of it?" Well, they will get justice quite by themselves — they will get it without any effort from us.

I believe that justice rules the world, and I believe that the man who uses his wealth rightfully will find just remuneration in the end.

*Questions:* (a) Please tell us your position on woman suffrage. (b) Would it be possible that a woman should be the leader of your Labour-Salvation Army?

*Van Eeden:* Well, ladies and gentlemen, I confess that I made a certain blunder on first reaching this country. Coming for the first time into contact with an American audience, I found that they were very fond of a little humour. And the first time that I spoke to an American audience I feared that I had been too serious, because I had felt serious; and the second time that I came before an American audience, an audience of American women, I tried to make a little joke. I told them that perhaps it would be better if they left the situation as it was, because they ruled in fact where the men were said to rule. It was a little joke, and I believe that most of the audience understood it for that. But some of your newspapers seemed to be very serious about it. They called me stupid — an ass. They styled me an ignoramus because I didn't want votes for the women. Now, all the while my position as to woman suffrage is absolutely neutral. (Laughter and applause.) I wouldn't have the impudence to influence the women on their own question. If they really want votes, let them have them — why not? And if they don't want them, why all right. Now, you are amused, but I am very serious. And as to the possibility of a woman for leader of such a great coöperative army as I speak of — well, it may be possible. I doubt it. (Laughter.) I have heard here of women who have great business ability and are great business leaders. There are some who have not yet the training for such leadership. At any rate there may be also in such a great community a department for the sake of women and their work, and for their interests, and at the head of such a department must be a woman, I am quite sure of that.

*Question:* How can the individual employer of labour put communistic principles into practice?

*Van Eeden:* According to my idea, individual employers who are absolutely serious, and are devoted to the whole question, must start anew. Such an employer might go along with his own concern and give his employees everything they wanted, but that would not serve. He has to start anew, and I believe that it would in the beginning be very difficult to transform an existing concern into a communistic one. And from my own experience I believe that such a concern will grow only from small beginnings, like a seed, and that afterward it will absorb the existing concerns, and that by no means could you begin right off to change the existing concerns to communistic enterprises.

*Question:* In your comparison to the bee-life you fail to mention the custom of killing the drones. Shall we do likewise to solve the problem of providing sufficient bread?

*Van Eeden:* I am inclined to take this as a joke. But it gives me the opportunity of saying one thing: that we must in a way be cruel to be kind. That is what I have learned after hard experience. I have been too kind, too meek, too tender, and I have paid for it dearly. And just as a clever surgeon will be cruel often when his patient is suffering, so must we, too, in a way, be cruel in order to start a new community. We must not expect communistic communities to be started with weak men. We must begin with strong men, and only later take in the weaker persons. We must be very severe in the beginning. And the lack of this severity I consider the reason for the failure of most of those experiments which have regarded socialism as merely a too-great kindness and tenderness. And this teaches that, for hard and cruel diseases, hard and cruel measures are sometimes necessary.

*Question:* How is the organization you speak of to go to work?

*Van Eeden:* I would gladly keep you here all night, but of course I have my thoughts and schemes which I cannot give you here in detail. It would be nonsense, for I have been only five days in this country, and how can I judge of local conditions? No, I will throw out some germs, and when there is a response,

then, in some small company, I will explain as much as I can. But here everybody would say "Impossible"; everybody would say, "You can do that on the other side but not here." I want, first, men who are willing. The scheme must be a coöperation, and embrace as many trades and businesses as possible; it must have a general department for banking, and it must have an agricultural, an industrial, a real-estate department, a department for distribution and commerce. This is only a brief summary, a very general idea. You can readily understand that, before a large audience such as this, I can give only hints, not details.

*Question:* How many members are there now in your socialist community? How many have deserted? In what industries are they chiefly engaged? Do they accumulate wealth, and if so, what becomes of it? How many of them are married? Are they strong characters, or mere followers, uneducated, and not capable of taking care of themselves?

*Van Eeden:* Well, I dare say that to answer this question now would put me in the way of being misunderstood by you. The facts are rather complicated. I have given a description of my experiments, in *The Independent*, and I hope to give still further explanations. But to answer these questions now I do not believe would be very useful. For instance, "How many members are there?" Well, there is only the beginning of an organization, and this has had bankruptcy and has now started anew. These experiments are only in their infancy, and a bankruptcy under such circumstances is like the coming down of an airship. We know now what has caused the first failures, and are prepared to go ahead in a better-instructed way.

The industries that I started were a bakery, a candy manufactory, market gardening, a farm, a distributive branch in Amsterdam, and all were to form one great organization. For the moment the enterprise is very weak and young, because we have not yet accumulated any notable wealth. We have only liabilities.

